

CĒRA KINGS OF THE ŚANGAM PERIOD





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To
His Highness Vañci Pāla
Sri Bāla Rāma Varma Kulāśēkhara,
Knight Grand Commander
Of The Most Eminent Order
Of The Indian Empire,
Mahārāja Of Travancore,
Who Worthily Represents
The Ancient And Historic House
Of Cēra Kings.
This Book
Is With His Highness's Gracious Permission
Respectfully Dedicated.



1937

PREFACE.

Every student of South Indian history knows that of the three great Tamil kingdoms that flourished in ancient days in South India, the Cōla and Pāṇḍya kingdoms have long ago ceased to exist, while the Cēra kingdom still continues under the rule of its indigenous kings. Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri of the Madras University has in his scholarly works on the Cōlas and the Pāṇḍyas given us the stories of those two royal houses, gathered from authentic sources; but as yet no intelligible account of the ancient Cēra kingdom based on reliable sources has been attempted. In the following pages, I have for the first time, tried to construct that story, so far as it can be recovered from ancient Tamil literature, which is the only available source from which it can be built up.

Tamil literature of the Śāṅgam period is the oldest native source that supplies relevant material for ancient South Indian history; for it is antecedent to the era of dated inscriptions relating to South Indian kings. This important source has now been made available principally by the labours of the greatest living Tamil scholar, Mahāmahōpādhyāya Dr. V. Swaminatha Aiyar,—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—whose indefatigable energy and selfless work of nearly half-a-century have succeeded, not only in saving from the ravages of white ants almost

the whole range of the Śāṅgam classics which had existed only in the form of fast-decaying palm-leaf manuscripts in remote corners of the southern peninsula, but also in bringing out critical editions of those priceless literary treasures. It is no exaggeration to say that it is impossible to repay the debt which the students of Tamil India owe to the venerable and learned Mahāmahōpādhyāya, by whose great work alone it has become possible to recover the outlines of the lost history of ancient South India, and to gain some knowledge of the state of civilization, the social, literary, and political life, and the religious ideas of the Tamil people in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Almost the first to recognise and demonstrate the supreme value of ancient Tamil literature in the construction of early South Indian history was my friend Dewan Bahadur Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, who worthily filled the chair of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology for many years in the Madras University, and by his numerous writings and his able direction of historical research in the post-graduate courses in the University has, as Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the well-known Indian historian, once said, founded the Madras School of Indian History. At a time when archaeology and epigraphy alone were regarded as supplying relevant material for purposes of history, he emphasised that for satisfactory historical

research, close study of ancient literature was also of prime importance; and by the systematic use in his works of material supplied by ancient Tamil classics, he successfully paved the way for succeeding workers in the field of ancient South Indian history. To-day Śāṅgam literature is freely acknowledged by all to be an indispensable, and in some cases, the only source of historical information in regard to the early Tamil kingdoms.

The material for the present work has been entirely gathered from the Śāṅgam works. One of them, *Patirrup-pattu*, relates exclusively to the Cēras, and several other Śāṅgam works are in some way or other connected with the Cēra kingdom and Cēra royalty. My object has been to draw as clearly as possible, from Śāṅgam literature alone, the outlines of the story of the early Cēra kings and their achievements. Ancient South India had no Herodotus or Thucydides, Livy or Tacitus. Its literature, however, abounds in materials from which a careful student can build up a reliable story of the social and religious life of the people and their progress in arts, sciences and literature. *Patirrup-pattu* gives a dynastic list of Cēra kings, with the length of the different reigns and the outstanding events of each reign; and though chronology as such is absent, and there is an entire absence of dated inscriptions, it is not impossible to construct a sort of chronological framework for the period with which

this book deals. I have attempted to construct such a framework; and though I do not claim for it absolute accuracy, I venture to think it will not be found unreasonable or wholly unacceptable.

The book has grown out of lectures originally delivered in Trivandrum and published in Indian historical journals; and my thanks are due to the editors of those journals who readily agreed to the use of the articles for this book. It is my duty and it gives me pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mahamahōpādhyāya Dr. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, the learned editor of the Śaṅgam classics from which I have drawn my materials. To Mr. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, M.A., Lecturer in Indian History in the University of Madras, I am particularly under obligation for his valuable suggestions and his untiring service in seeing the work through the press with scrupulous care. My sincere thanks are also due to Mr. T. V. Mahalingam, M.A., who gladly undertook the preparation of the Index and Bibliography.

TRIVANDRUM,	}	K. G. SESA AİYAR.
15th January 1937.		

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ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED AND
THEIR EXPLANATION.

<i>Agam</i>	..	Aga-Nānūru
<i>Ain</i>	..	Ain-Kura-Nūru
<i>I.H.Q.</i>	..	Indian Historical Quarterly
<i>J.I.H.</i>	..	Journal of Indian History
<i>J.O.R.</i>	..	Journal of Oriental Research
<i>Kurun</i>	..	Kuruntokai
<i>Mani</i>	..	Maṇimēkalai
<i>Marutam</i>	..	Kalit-tokai; Marutak-kali
<i>Mullai</i>	...	Mullaik-kali
<i>Nar</i>	..	Narṇinai
<i>Neytal</i>	..	Kalit-tokai; Neytal-Kali
<i>Pālai</i>	..	Kalit-tokai; Pālaik-Kali
<i>P.p.</i>	..	Patirrup-pattu
<i>Puraṇam</i>	..	Pura-Nānūru
<i>Q.J.M.S.</i>	..	Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society
<i>Śilap.</i>	..	Śilappadhikāram
<i>Tol.</i>	..	Tol-Kāppiyam



CHAPTER I.

S. 1. *Sources and Their Nature.*

The only source from which the story of the old Cēra Kingdom can be constructed is the literature of the Śāṅgam period, for that story is unknown to epigraphy; but even Śāṅgam literature can help us only to prepare an outline which at best can be treated merely as tentative in regard to the results that it may disclose. Of the Śāṅgam works, the most important for the present purpose are *Pura-nānūru*, *Patirrup-pattu*, and *Śilappadhikāram*. *Pura-nānūru* is a collection of 400 lyrics by different poets, numbering about 160; and the collection derives its name from the circumstance that the lyrics therein relate to *puram*, one of the two fundamental categories of poetic material according to the ancient rules of Tamil poetics and rhetoric. *Puram* or *Purap-poral* is concerned with the external relations of princes, which embrace war and politics. Though these are generally court lyrics, panegerizing in the main a king or a chieftain of the ancient Tamil land, they are usually direct and natural in language and sentiment and free from the exaggerated artificiality of later poetry; and most poems are by singers who are contemporaries of the personages sung about. One can easily see that for purposes of history, the lyrics of the *Pura-nānūru* collection must be of supreme value. *Patirrup-pattu* is a collection of poems dealing exclusively with the wars and

other achievements, including those in the art of peace, of Cēra kings. As the name implies, there were ten poems, each consisting of a decad of lyrics; but of these, two have not till now been discovered—the first and the tenth. Each one of the existing eight decads deals with the achievements and merits of a separate Cēra king, and the author of each decad is a contemporary of the hero of his song. It is, therefore, obvious that for an account of the early Cēras, *Patirrup-pattu* is of incalculable value, *Śilappadhikāram* is the first regular epic in the Tamil language, and it is indispensable for a knowledge of the early Cēra Kingdom, as its real hero is a Cēra monarch, Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, and its author a Cēra prince.

Besides, from *Aganānūru* and *Narīṇai* also, which are well-known Śaṅgam collections of poems relating to *agam* or love, we derive some help in building up our story. I regard all these sources as of the nature of contemporary documents in respect of the kings of whom they speak. They are poetic accounts of the achievements of princes, who according to the conception of those early times were worthy of being extolled as high examples. The conception of biography as a faithful portrait of a man's life is entirely modern; but that circumstance cannot detract from the value of these poems as sources of authentic history; and I have unhesitatingly utilized them in constructing my narrative.

In this connection, it may be mentioned that the information supplied by the author of each *Patirrup-pattu* is sometimes found amplified or augmented in the *Patigam* or epilogue appended to it; and there can be no doubt that the *Patigam* was added later by some one other than the author of the poem. So too, for a correct assessment of the historical value of the information conveyed by the lyrics of the *Pura-nānūru* collection, we have to rely on the colophons appended to them; and there is no means of knowing when and by whom these colophons were appended to the poems. There cannot, however, be any doubt about the antiquity of the *patigams* and the colophons; and it is rational to hold that their authors gave fixity to the ancient traditions of the Tamil country current in their day.

Tradition is really human testimony regarding the long past; and though like all human testimony it is liable to error, it should not on that account be discarded as wholly unworthy of attention, unless, indeed, we hold that in ancient times people were incapable of discriminating between truth and falsehood. Tradition is, in effect, reputation arising from the concurrence of many parties unconnected with each other, but all interested in investigating the subject; and in the absence of trustworthy first-hand evidence, tradition may and ought to be accepted as the ground-work for history, especially in matters where the

probability for personal bias is little. In this view, I see no reason to doubt the correctness of the information conveyed by the *patigams* and the colophons, and I have accepted the veracity of these very ancient documents which the Tamil world has never thought of questioning for long centuries, ever since they were written by persons who could have had no personal bias whatever.

S. 2. *Uḍiyan Cēralātan, the first Cēra King.*

The extant sections of *Patirrup-pattu* deal with the achievements of eight Cēra kings, and they are:—

Imayaveramban Neḷum-Cēralātan,
 Pal-yānai Śel-Keḷu-Kuṭṭuvan,
 Kaḷankāik-kaṇṇi-Narmuḍi-Cēral,
 Kuḍal-Pirakōṭṭiya Śen-Kuṭṭuvan,
 Āḍa-kōṭṭaiṭṭu-Cēralātan,
 Śelvak-kaḍunkō-Vāliyātan,
 Takadūr-erinta Perum-Cēral Irumpoṭai, and
 Kuḍakkō Ilam-Cēral-Irumpoṭai.

For the names of the Cēra kings celebrated in the *Pura-nāṭṭu* lyrics, we have to depend on the colophon appended to each lyric of that collection. From the colophons, we gather the names of seventeen Cēra kings; and they are:—

Cēramān Perum-Śorpu Uḍiyan Cēralātan,
 Cēramān Karuvūr-ēpiya Oḻvāḷ Kōp-perum-Cēral
 Irumpoṭai,
 Cēramān Kaḍunko Vāliyātan,
 Cēramān Pālai-pāḍiya Perum Kaḍunkō,
 Cēramān Antuvan Cēral Irumpoṭai,

Cēramān Yānaikkat Śēy Māntaram-Cēral
Irumporai.

Cēramān Kōk-Kōdai Mārban,
Cēramān Takadūcerinta Perum-Cēral Irumporai,
Cēramān Kuṭṭuvan Kōdai,
Cēramān Kuḍakkō Neḍum-Cēralātan,
Cēramān Perum-Cēralātan,
Cēramān Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai,
Cēramān Kuḍakkō Cēral-Irumporai,
Cēramān Kōṭṭambalattut-tuñciya Māk-kōdai,
Cēramān Vañcan,
Cēramān Kaḍalōṭṭiya Vēl-keḷu Kuṭṭuvan, and
Cēramān Mā-Ven Kō.

As we can see easily, some of these names are re-duplications. It will be my attempt in the following pages to arrange these Cēras in their chronological order, ascertain their approximate dates and show by what deeds or achievements their names live in literature. Perhaps in the discussion, it will be possible to relate these kings to one another and to get a glimpse of the social, religious and political life of the people in the Cēra country in those distant days.

For the earliest Cēra known to Tamil literature, we have to go to *Puṟaṇānūru*. He is Cēramān Perum-Śorru Uḍiyan Cēralātan, who is celebrated in song by Murañciyūr Muḍināgarāyar in *Puṟam* 2. That lyric, which, if we except some possible references to him in *Aga-nānūru*, is the only poem sung in his honour, is given in translation below.

Hail, noble king! whose nature well combines
The qualities of all the elements;

Whose long forgiving suff'ring is a match
 To mother earth's; whose judgment wise is wide
 As all-pervading ether, and whose might
 Like air illimitable, and like fire
 Resistless, with refreshful mercy still
 Is tempered, which thy glorious sway upholds,
 As water cool enlivens nature's face.
 Hail, warrior-king! Thy land with plenty smiles,
 With untold wealth the deep sea's bosom yields,
 And treasures new that ceaseless to thy ports
 From foreign lands rich merchant vessels bring.
 The sun, that in thy eastern sea is born,
 In thy foam-crested western ocean seeks
 His rest at eve. Sky bounds thy land alone!
 Majestic monarch! When the ten times ten
 Kauravas, crowned with golden *tumbai* wreaths,
 Wrathful in battle 'gainst the heroes five—
 Lords of the fiery steeds with tossing mane—
 Their patrimony lusting after, fought,
 Thou didst unstinted savoury food supply
 To either host, till all the Kurus fell.
 Illustrious king! though luscious milk may sour,
 The sun his brilliance lose, and e'en the four
 Vedas themselves their holy teachings change,
 Mayst thou by ministers be served, whose love
 For thee and wisdom in thy councils shall
 Constant through all vicissitudes remain!
 Mayst thou in power and glory steadfast shine
 Throughout all time like *Potiya's* sacred mount
 And golden-peaked Himalaya, where rest
 The dainty headed fawn and large-eyed deer
 Securely by the holy triple fire
 Which for their evening rites the sages raise!

In this translation, I have followed the
 ancient commentator of *Pura-nānūru*, who

makes out that this Cēra king was a contemporary of the Pāṇḍavās and the Kauravās, and in the great battle of Kurukṣētra, he supplied the rival armies with food. The *Silappadhikāram* also seems to favour the view that there was a Cēra king who supplied food to the rival hosts at Kurukṣētra.¹ The words of the lyric need not, it seems to me, be taken to refer to him. Perhaps the king celebrated in this poem gave a memorial offering to the spirits at the anniversary of the Mahābhārata War, in which the heroes from whom he traced his descent, had died; and that is probably what the poet refers to. This seems to be supported by a lyric by Māmūlanār (*Agam* 233) where we read:

மதப்படைக்குதினா மாணவன்திடு
ததக்கமெய்திடு தோய்யாநல்வினை
முதியப்பெணிய வுதியஞ்சேரல்
பெருஞ்சேற கொடுத்த ஞானனா.

and Pandit R. Raghava Iyengar of Rāmnād also seems to hold that view.²

Udiyan Cēral was obviously famous for his lavish hospitality; and his kitchen has become a bye-word for sumptuous feeding. Thus Kōṭṭambalattuficiya Cēramān has in *Agam* 168: *கொடைக்கடனென்றகோட கொஞ்சினுதியைட்டெப்போல*. This Cēramān who is stated to have died at Kōṭṭambalam is, perhaps, identical with

1 *Silap. Vāṭṭuk-kōḍai-āśolevari*, l.

2 *Vide* Preface to *Aganānūru*—Rajagopala Aiyangar's Edition, p. 42. *Vide* also P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar's '*History of the Tamils*', p. 492.

Kōṭṭambalattut-tuñciya Māk-kōdai, the author of *Puṇam* 245, of whom we shall hear more, later on. He tells us in this lyric that Udiyan's royal kitchen was at Kuḷumūr, perhaps Ptolemy's Kourellour, a place, so far as I can see, situated possibly in North Travancore. I suggest that it is very probably the place now known as Kumuli, near the source of the Periyar river, in the Devikolam Division of Travancore. Kuḷumūr may, by metathesis, easily become Kumuli, just as Musiri, the seaport of the Cēra Kingdom so famous in Śāṅgam literature, appears as Murasi in Sanskrit works. We cannot say whether Kuḷumūr was the original capital of the Cēras, taking for the present that Kuḷumūr is a proper noun denoting a place; possibly it was; but we can only say that Tamil tradition does not appear to have known a time when the Cēra capital was not Vañci. We see from *Agā-nānūru* that Udiyan Cēral extended his kingdom by his conquests. Māmālanār refers to him in *Agam* 65 as:

ஊடு கவிரைநாற்பு உ டியன் சேரன்

that is, Udiyan Cēral who conquered others' territories and annexed them to his own.

In *Puṇam* 2, Udiyan Cēral is called Vānavaramban, and this term means 'one whose kingdom is bounded by the sky' or as explained in the *Cūḍāmaṇi Nighaṇḍu*, 'by the sea'. It has been suggested that, perhaps the form of the word was originally Vānavar-anban, which

reminds one of Aśoka's *Dēvānām-priya*; but it seems to me that the suggestion is far-fetched. Pāṇini explains *Dēvānām-priya* as meaning 'an obstinate fool'. It appears that in Vēdic and allied Sanskrit literature, *Dēvānām-priya* is employed as a term of reproach to denote a heretic.³ For another liberty taken with the name of this Cēra king, some Malayalam scholars of to-day are responsible; for the grotesque transformation of the name *Vāna-Varamban* Udiyan Cēral into Udayan Bāna Varman is their leger-demain. *Vānavaramban* is a descriptive epithet, having reference to his extensive territory and conquests or his maritime kingdom. If, as we see from *Agan-nānūru*,⁴ he was great in war, he was also great in the arts of peace. Trade and commerce flourished in the land and foreign merchantmen called at its ports. He was a munificent patron of letters, as we see from the same *Agam*, where we read:

உதிவஞ்சேரல்
பாடிசென்ற பரிசெய்தோன
அகவியரிவாழி.

Udiyan Cēral may be regarded as the founder of the Cēra dynasty of the Śangam period. Having regard to the scheme of

³ Vide Śrī Śankaracharya's *Madras Discourses*, pp. 147—163. See also V. R. R. Dikshitar, *The Mauryan Polity*, p. 291 where reference is made to other kings bearing that title.

⁴ *Agam* 65.

arrangement adopted in *Patirrup-pattu*, there can be no doubt that he was the hero of the first decad of that collection, which is now unfortunately missing; for we find from the *Patigam* of second *Patirrup-pattu* that Udiyan Cēral was the father of Imayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan, the hero of that decad. From the same source we learn that Udiyan Cēral had married Nallini, the daughter of Veḷiyan Vēymān, afterwards known as Cōlan Pōrvaikkō-Perumarkillī, whose father Tittan was, perhaps, the earliest of the Cōla kings who ruled at Uraiūr. It is interesting to note that, among the names by which the Cēra is known, the *Nighandus* mention Udiyan and Vāna-varamban, the names that this king bore. It may be permissible to suggest that, perhaps, Udiyan-pērūr, the Diampier of the Christians, which is on the northern boundary line of Travancore, was founded by him.

S. 3. *Imayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan.*

We may now follow the lead of *Patirrup-pattu*. The hero of the second decad of that work is Imayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan, the son of Udiyan Cēral by Veḷiyan's daughter Nallini. Imayavaramban was a great warrior, and he extended his kingdom to the north. He is said to have conquered seven kings and annexed their territories to his kingdom;⁵ and he is praised as having set or imprinted his

5 *Patirrup-pattu* 14.

bow on the slope of the Himalayas,⁶ so that his prowess was known, in the words of his panegyrist, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas. Among his successful wars were those against the 'Kaṇambu' clan.⁷ The territory of the 'kaṇambu' clan, the clan that had the *Kaṇambu* (*adina cordifolia*) as its totem or guardian tree, is the territory of the Nannans, the 'gold producing Konkanam' of ancient Tamil literature;⁸ and the Cēras seem to have had several wars with this tribe, which apparently was a source of harassment on the border. The description in *Patirrup-pattu* 12 shows that Imayavaramban's victory over the Kaṇambas was an event of supreme importance; for the poet compares Imayavaramban's victory to that of the War-God Subrahmanya over Sūra-Padma.⁹ It was obviously first among the outstanding events of his reign; for in references to him, prominent mention is frequently made to his victory over the Kaṇambas.¹⁰ In *Patirrup-pattu* 20 the poet propounds the question: "Do you ask me who is my king?" and gives the proud answer:—"He is the invincible Nedum-Cēralātan who utterly destroyed the Kaṇambu". In praising

6 *Agam* 127.

7 *Patirrup-pattu* 11, 12, 20; also *Agam* 127, 347.

8 *Nar.* 381; *Agam* 173.

9 *Patirrup-pattu* 11.

10 *Ibid.*, 12 and 20.

the ancestry of Iḷam-Cēral Irumporai, Perum-Kunṇūr Kīḷār acclaims him¹¹ as—

கடம்பின் முழுமுதற் றந்து பொரு முன்னெய்திய பெரி
யோர் மருக.

Māmūlar in *Agam* 127, begins the narration of this Cēra's great achievements with his conquest of the Kaḍamba country:—

வலம்பரிமுறத்தே சேரேந்தன்
முற்றோட்டிக் கடம்புறுத் தியலத்து
முன்னோர் மருக மணக்குறிந்நொறித்து
கன்னகர் மரிதை முற்றத்தொன்னுர்
பணிதிறைதந்த பாபசோமன்செய்க.

It is difficult to say whether these Kaḍambas were the stock from which the Banavaśi Kaḍambas came; perhaps they were. A view has gained ground among some scholars that the Kaḍambu clan were pirates,¹² and Ptolemy's phrase *Ariake andron peiraton* has at least in part been responsible for it. The latter words, as was pointed out by a recent writer may be regarded as a corruption of *Andrabhṛtya*; but I am inclined to think that the view therein expressed, that the Kaḍambas were not a piratical people at all, cannot be maintained, in view of the language of the opening lines of *Patirrup-pattu* 11 and expressions like—

முற்றோட்டிக்கடம்பெறித்து (*Agam* 127.)
மரக்கடலோட்டிக்கடம்பறுத்து (*Agam* 347.)

that Māmūlar employs.

11 *Patirrup-pattu*, 87.

12 Vide Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar's *Beginnings of South Indian History*, p. 232.

This Cēra is also said to have won a victory over the Yavanas. There is no means of knowing where exactly the colony of the Yavanas was or who exactly they were. The term *Yavana* has been taken to denote the Greeks; but I am not sure if it did not originally denote the Javanese or the Arabs;¹³ and it is noteworthy that Ptolemy makes no mention of a Greek colony. The punishment meted out to the Yavanas by Imayavaramban is singular. Their arms are said to have been pinioned behind their back, and *ghī* poured on their head.

In *Agam* 127, Māmūlar also tells us of his conquest of Māntai which not improbably is the Mandagara of the *Periplus*.

Obviously the land of the Cēra was a rich and flourishing country. Among jewels worn in the land were those made of flashing gems set in gold.¹⁴ Besides rice, meat was also used as food; and drinking palm wine was prevalent.¹⁵ There was no limit to the bounty of this great Cēra who was as liberal as Akkuran himself, one of the reputed seven first *Vallals* of Tamil tradition. In the words of the poet:

செரிபெயர் கஞகமாய்நிறுத்
சேறவர தன் பெயர்யவனாசனோடு | 16 a

13 For the latest discussion on the identification of the Yavanas, see *J.I.H.*, Vol. XIV, Pt. I.

14 *Patirrupattu* 16.

15 & 15a *Ibid.*, 18.

"The rains may fail; but never the munificence of Cēralātan". And indeed, the poet may well be acquitted of exaggeration, when we remember that, according to the colophon, he was, for composing the second decad of *Patirrup-pattu*, rewarded with the free gift of 500 villages in Umbark-kāḍu (literally elephant-forest), perhaps the region about the Anaimalai in North-West Travancore, and the revenue for thirty-eight years from the southern province of the kingdom. It is interesting to note that there is still, a house bearing the name of *Umbarkkōḍu-viḍu* in Vaikam in North Travancore. He is praised as a man of his word; and his life was dedicated to acts of bounty and beneficence. Even in seasons of drought, he could not bear to see any one suffer from hunger.¹⁶ He made rich donations and presents of jewels to temples; and he shone like Viṣṇu himself.¹⁷ We learn that silk, diamond and gold ornaments were in use in the land.¹⁸ He is said to have reigned for fifty-eight years. In regard to his name also, some Malayalam scholars have taken undue liberty and transformed Imayavaramban into Imaya Varman!

S. 4. *Pal-yānai Śel-Keḷu-Kuṭṭuvan.*

Next in order comes Pal-yānai Śel-Keḷu-Kuṭṭuvan, brother of Imayavaramban.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Patirrup-pattu*, 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12; *Agam*, 127.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, III, *Patigam*.

His capital stood on the banks of the broad Periyār,²⁰ and near the sounding ocean.²¹ He was also a great warrior and made extensive conquests,²² among which the conquest of Konkar-Nādu is specifically mentioned.²³ He was the lord of Pūli-Nādu and the Ceruppu-mountains²⁴ as well as of the Aiyirai-Malai—probably the same as Aiyitai-Malai in Central Travancore near the source of the Periyār—and the region of the Periyār which even in times of protracted drought, when the falls in the hills have gone dry, is rich in water!²⁵ In the early years of his reign, he seems to have been a fierce warrior; and it is significant that out of the ten lyrics in *Patirrup-pattu* III, as many as seven praise his irresistible prowess in war. He is eulogized as Kuṭṭuvan, “the ever victorious lord of vast armies and the protective armour of fierce-eyed warriors”.²⁶ The march of his army into the territories of his foes meant the utter devastation of those lands and their conversion into deserts infested by robbers.²⁷ But a great change came over the spirit of his dream in later years; and like

20 *Patirrup-pattu*, 28.

21 *Ibid.*, 31.

22 *Ibid.*, 23.

23 *Ibid.*, 22.

24 *Ibid.*, 21.

25 *Ibid.*, 28.

26 *Ibid.*, 21, 22 and 24.

27 *Ibid.*, 24, 25 and 26.

Asoka after his war in Kalinga, Pal-yānai Śel-Keļu-Kuṭṭuvan turned away from war and carnage, and came under the influence of the spirit. As a warrior he used to worship Korravai, to whom he made elaborate sacrifice when starting for war;²⁸ but afterwards he followed the law of the Brahmanas, who daily performed their six-fold functions,²⁹ and accepted Neḍumbāratāyanār as his preceptor. He helped the Brahmana poet Palai Gautamanār, the author of *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* III, to perform ten *Yāgas*.³⁰ He never swerved from his word, but kept straight on even like the sun.³¹ He was a patron of letters, and all branches of learning, *Ṭeṇṇē Ṭeṇṇē paṭṭaṇṇē Ṭeṇṇē*^{31a} both religious and secular, thrived in the land. His kingdom was so rich and prosperous, that his unstinted liberality did not affect in any manner the wealth of the country. He duly performed *Dāvayajñā* and *Atithiyajñā*,³² and acquired merit and greatness, 'vaster in extent than even the five elements'³³ and apparently came to deserve the name of Dharmaputra.³⁴ After a reign of twenty-five

28 *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*, 30.

29 *Ibid.*, 24.

30 *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*, III.

31 *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* 21.

31a *Ibid.*, 21.

32 *Ibid.*, 21.

33 *Ibid.*, 24.

34 *Puram* 366.

years he followed the example of his preceptor and became an anchorite, after dividing his kingdom among his kindred.³⁵

S. 5. *Nārmuḍiccēral*.

Pal-yānai Śel-Keḷu Kuṭṭuvan was succeeded by Kaḷaṅkāik-kaṇṇi Nārmuḍiccēral, son of Iṃayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan. Nārmuḍiccēral is the hero of the 4th decad of *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* of which Kāppiyāṇṇu Kāppiyānār is the author. Though he was a great warrior, he treated his enemies with great clemency and magnanimity; a circumstance that the author of IV *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* particularly mentions with admiration:

வண்புரிசுறத்த
பண்புரிசுறத்தாழிதாழிதாழி
செவ்வாழிதாழிதாழிதாழிதாழி

We shall be able to appreciate the full significance of this praise when we remember that in those early days the victors in the field of battle are said to have pulled out the teeth of their enemies, and exposed them to public view at the gates of their capital.³⁶ The most important of the expeditions of this Cēra were those against Neḷumidaḷ or Añci,³⁷ and Nannan³⁸ both of whom he defeated in battle. Añci was perhaps a predecessor of Auvai's friend who is known in literature as Atiyamān

³⁵ *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* III, *Paṭiṇṇam*.

³⁶ *Agam* 211; *Nar.* 18.

³⁷ *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

Nedumān Añci; if so, he must have been an Atiyamān, and the chief of Kutiraimalai³⁹ with his head-quarters at Takadūr,^{39a} now in Mysore. I suggest Atiyamān is the *Satiyaputra* of Aśoka's inscription. The initial *a* becomes *ha*, which again becomes *sa* in *prakrit*; and *mān* is abbreviation for *magan* which means *putra*; and thus Atiyamān becomes Satiya-putra on the analogy of Cēramān equals Kērala-putra. I know other identifications of Satiyaputra have been suggested; but so far as I remember, previous writers have, consciously or unconsciously, read the name in the Edict as *Satyaputra*, including even the latest writer on the subject, Mr. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, who has contributed to the *Indian Culture*^{39b} an article on "Who are Satyaputras"? The word is not Satyaputra but Satiyaputra; and no attempt has been made before to explain the presence of *i* in the name. The identification here suggested of Atiyamān with Satiyaputra satisfactorily accounts for the presence of the particle *i* in the name appearing in Aśoka's Edict. Atiyamān's territory will

39 *Agam* 32.

39a Some scholars identify this with Dharmapuri in Salem District.

39b Vol. I, Pt. III, Mr. Govinda Pai in his paper on *Satyaputra* in *Krishnaswami Aiyangar Commemoration Volume* (pp. 33—47) gives the following involved equation: Śāntika (S. Kanara)=Śāntika=Sāntika=Sātika=Sātiya=Satiya.

exactly occupy the place where, having regard to the order in which the principalities or kingdoms of South India are mentioned in Aśoka's Edict, Satiyaputra's territory may be expected to be situate. The Atiyamāns were an independent line of chiefs till they were subdued by the Cēra, whose vassal they ultimately became. Nannan, as has already been stated, was the chief of Pūḷi and the head of the Kaḷambu clan.⁴⁰ This Nannan appears to have recovered some of his lost territory; and Nārmuḍiccēral advanced against the insurgent chief and won a decisive victory over him at Vāgaip̄perunturai, wrested back the territory⁴¹ and subjugated the clan. Nannan became thereafter a vassal or feudatory of the Cēra. Thus in *Agam* 258, Paraṇar refers to him as Nannan *Udiyan*, and in *Agam* 44 he is referred to as one of the feudatory generals of the Cēra. We may, therefore, hold that some time after the crushing defeat at Vāgaip̄perunturai, Nannan became the ally and supporter of the Cēra, whom he recognised as his overlord.

Nārmuḍiccēral was apparently an ideal monarch; and Kāppiyāṟṟu Kāppiyānār, who has sung the fourth decad of *Patirrup-pattu* in his honour, tells us that the king lived for the good of others; the poet's words being *அறிவுகேள்வாழ்வினியாகல்* ⁴². He freely gave away elephants as

⁴⁰ Vide also *Patirrup-pattu* III *Patigam*.

⁴¹ *Agam* 119.

⁴² *Patirrup-pattu*, 38; 39.

present.⁴² Among the shrines in his kingdom, prominent mention is made of the shrine of கமஞ்சூர்த்தழை யலங்குத் தெவன்; and the old scholiast explains this to mean the deity in Tiruvanantapuram (i.e. Trivandrum).⁴³ This explanation is probably correct. In *Agam* 359, Māmūlar has வாணவரம்பன் வெளியத்தனை which means 'like வெளியத்த of Vāṇa Varamban'. This would show that in Māmūlar's time Veļiyattu or Veļiyam was in the Cēra Kingdom. Veļiyam is most probably the modern Viļiṇcam, a coast town some miles south of Trivandrum, where in later years a well-known naval battle was fought. Balita, which appears to be a corruption of Veļiyattu, is said in the *Periplus* to be in the Cōla Kingdom; but that probably is a misdescription. We may, therefore, hold, in the state of our present knowledge, that in this Cēra's reign his kingdom embraced Trivandrum in the south, as the commentator indicates. This monarch is also called Vānavaramban,⁴⁴ possibly because in his reign had been attained the ideal of peace and safety graphically described in *Puram* 2, as having existed in the land in the days of Udiyan Cēral, the first to bear the title of Vānavaramban. He was, like his predecessors, a liberal patron of letters; and we learn from the colophon that the author of the fourth decad of *Patirrup-pattu* was given forty lakhs

43 *Patirrup-pattu*, 40.

44 *Ibid.*, 31.

45 *Ibid.*, 31.

of gold coins in appreciation of his poem. Nārmudiccēral reigned, according to the colophon, for twenty-five years.

S. 6. *Sen-Kuṭṭuvan*.

The next in order in the main line is Sen-Kuṭṭuvan, stated to be another son of Iṃayavaramban. Sen-Kuṭṭuvan's name is, perhaps the best known among the Cēra Kings to the ordinary student of Tamil literature. He is the hero of the fifth decad of *Paṭiṟrup-pattu*, of which the author is Parapar, one of the greatest poets of the Śangam age. He is also the real hero of *Śilappadhikāram*, the well-known Tamil epic by the Cēra prince Ilankō Adikal, though there are some who, it seems to me, needlessly entertain doubts about it. He was a great warrior, and with his victorious army he is said to have conquered vast regions from Cape Comorin in the South to the Himalayas in the North "where the gods dwell":—

கடவுள்களையெல்லாவாங்குநெடுவரை
கட திணையெல்லையுயராத
தென்னாக்குமரிபெடாபிடைபரசர்
முரசடைப்பெருஞ்சமர்தளையவர்ப்பெழுச்
சொல்பவகாட்டைத் தோல்விலிணழித்த
மோசதோனைப்பொலந்தாக்குடைய ⁴⁶

He was always in front in the field of battle, leading his army; and his soldiers used shields made of tough bull-hide which effectively protected them from the darts of

46 *Paṭiṟrup-pattu*, 43.

their enemies.⁴⁷ Early in his reign, there seem to have been disturbances on the borders of his kingdom, which had to be quelled. Among the chiefs that he subjugated was Mōgur-Mannan, a proud warrior well-known in ancient Tamil literature.⁴⁸ His name was Paḷaiyan, and his totem was the neem tree,⁴⁹ which shows he was a feudatory of the Pāṇḍya. One of the Cēra's principal allies was Arugai, an enemy of the Chief of Mōgur.⁵⁰ Paḷaiyan went to war against Arugai, who sought Śen-Kuṭṭuvan's help; and in that war the lord of Mōgur, though he was assisted by other reigning princes and chieftains, was utterly defeated by the great Cēra.⁵¹ Śen-Kuṭṭuvan also waged a successful war against the Kongar.⁵² He won a great naval victory⁵³ by reason of which there came to be attached to his name the distinctive great naval victory⁵⁴ by reason of which there epithet Kadal-Pirakkōṭṭiya,⁵⁵ which means, 'who destroyed the efficacy of the sea as a refuge'. It was apparently one of the most decisive naval victories in Cēra history,⁵⁶ and Śen-Kuṭṭuvan falsified by that achievement the

47 *Paṭirrup-pattu*, 45.

48 *Ibid.*, 44 and 49.

49 *Ibid.*, 49; V *Paṭigam* and *Śūlap*. XXVIII, 124-6.

50 *Ibid.*, 44.

51 *Ibid.*, 49.

52 *Śūlap*. XXV, 152-5.

53 *Paṭirrup-pattu* 45, 46, 48; *Agam* 212.

54 *Ibid.*, V *Paṭigam*.

55 *Ibid.*, 45.

popular belief that an island enemy was unassailable and invincible.⁵⁶ I consider that it was by this naval victory that Muširi was made a safe port of call; for we know that in Pliny's days, (c. 80 A.C.) pirates were a constant source of danger in those waters, and in Kuṭṭuvan's days *Yavana* ships called in large numbers at the port of Muširi and in exchange for gold took back with them cargoes of pepper and other products.⁵⁷ The irrepressible Nannan again rose in revolt; but Śen-Kuṭṭuvan put down the disturbance and destroyed Viyalūr, one of Nannan's strongholds,⁵⁸ and Koḍukūr, possibly another of Nannan's strongholds.⁵⁹ According to *Śīlap-padhikāram*, Nannan was helped in this war by the Cōla and the Pāṇḍya.⁶⁰ As trophy of his success against the kings and chieftains he had vanquished, he wore on his breast as a personal ornament the crest-jewels of seven ruling princes.⁶¹

After the destruction of Viyalūr, Śen-Kuṭṭuvan turned his attention to the Cōla country where a war of succession had broken out after the death of Karikāla. We find that nine princes contested the right of Perum-Kiḷḷi afterwards

56 *Patirrup-pattu*, 45.

57 *Agam*, 149.

58 *Patirrup-pattu*, V *Patigam* and *Agam*, 97.

59 *Ibid.*, V *Patigam*.

60 *Śīlap.*, XXV, 153-5.

61 *Patirrup-pattu*, 45 and *Śīlap.*, XXVIII, 169.

known as Nalam-Kiḷi Śēt-Cenni, the lawful claimant, who is said to be the brother-in-law of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan. Śen-Kuṭṭuvan went to his help, defeated his rivals at Nērivāyil, and placed him securely on the throne.⁶² We also learn that this Cēra undertook an expedition to North India for consigning the remains of his deceased mother to the holy waters of the Ganges,⁶³ when he met Aryan princes in battle and defeated them. Later too, he led an expedition to the Gangetic region for fetching suitable stone from that hallowed ground for the effigy of Kaṇṇaki, the apotheosised wife or Pattini-Kaḍavuḷ, which he intended to consecrate in a temple that he proposed to build. He had received a request from his friend the Śātakarni for assistance, and he took advantage of it. The story of this northern march is not found in *Paṭiṟṟup-pattu*. It must have taken place some time after Paranaṇar's poem had been composed and possibly after Paranaṇar's death. It is, however found in *Śilappadhikāram*; and I see no reason to reject it. I have shown elsewhere that there is no historical improbability in it;⁶⁴ and the learned writer on Ancient India in the Cambridge *Shorter History of India* states there

⁶² *Paṭiṟṟup-pattu*, V *Paṭiṇam* and *Śilap.*, XXVIII, ll. 115-19 also XXVII, ll. 118 ff.

⁶³ *Śilap.*, XXV, 160 ff.

⁶⁴ Vide my article 'A Problem of Ancient South Indian History' in III, *J.I.H.* pp. 648 ff., also Chap. VII, S. 5 *infra*.

is probably a substratum of fact in the account of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan's expedition to the north.⁶⁵ Reading that epic and Parapar's fifth decad of *Patirrup-pattu*, we can easily see that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was pre-eminently a warrior, who always sought fresh conquests. *Patirrup-pattu* 50 tells us that he spent long nights in thinking out plans for successful campaigns. We learn from *Śilappadhikāram* that for fifty out of the fifty-five years of his reign, he was engaged in gaining the laurels of war.⁶⁶ He was the most powerful monarch of his day in the South, and his might was such that he could domineer over the Cōla and the Pāndya. This will be patent from the fact that the insignia that his royal decrees bore, consisted of the bow, the fish, and the tiger.⁶⁷

In spite of his constant wars, his internal administration of the country left nothing to be desired. He was a great patron of arts and letters,⁶⁸ and he was so lavish that even the treasures he had brought from his naval victory he bestowed on bards and singers without strict regard to merit; so indiscriminate was he in his bounty. He was probably partial to *Kūttu* or dancing and the drama which he patronised very liberally;⁶⁹ and we read in

65 *Shorter History*, p. 174.

66 *Śilap.*, XXVIII, 129-32.

67 *Śilap.*, XXV, 171. 2; 87-90; XXVI, 168 ff.

68 *Patirrup-pattu*, 49.

69 *Ibid.*, 42.

Śilappadhikāram that on his return from his eventful expedition to the North, a Śākkaiyan of Paravūr, a town in North Travancore, well versed in the art of *Kāttu*, entertained him and the queen by reciting with appropriate action the story of Tṛpura-Sambhāra.⁷⁰ He is said to have made a free gift of the revenue derived from Umbarkkādu to Paraṇar in appreciation of the fifth decad of *Paṭiṇṇap-pattu*. He did much to develop trade and commerce; and at his ports, foreign merchantmen called and carried on brisk business. We read that large and beautiful ships of the Yavanas brought gold in great quantity to the port of Muśiri and went back laden with pepper, and that Kuṭṭuvan distributed as presents the rare products of the sea and the mountain.⁷¹ His was a rich country, with a never failing supply of water. The Periyār, the principal river of the Cēra country, is described as full even in seasons of drought,⁷² and the people that it attracted for bath are stated to be 'innumerable like the sands of the beach'.⁷³ In luxuriance, the land was even as rich as the country 'watered not only by the Kāvēri but by the accumulated waters of Mukkūḍal'⁷⁴ or the confluent waters of three

70 *Śilap.*, XXVIII, ll. 76-7.

71 *Agam.* 149; and *Paran.* 343.

72 *Paṭiṇṇap-pattu* 43.

73 *Ibid.*, 48.

74 *Ibid.*, 50.

rivers. Toddy was freely consumed in large measure.⁷⁵ In hot weather, he used to camp in shady forests;⁷⁶ and we find from *Śilap-padhikāram* that it was when he was so camping on one occasion that he received news of Kappaki's death from hillmen who had witnessed it. A detailed and informing account of Cēraṇ Śen-Kuṭṭuvan is supplied by Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar in his learned monograph on that monarch.⁷⁷ This great Cēra King reigned for 55 years; and in his kingdom Hindus, Jains and Buddhists lived together in perfect amity. His consecration of a temple to Pattini-Dēvi was an event of international significance; and among those who attended the function was King Gaja-Bāhu of Ceylon. Probably this event contributed much to the spread of Bhagavati worship, now so common on the Malabar coast.

S. 7. *Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭuc-Cēralātan.*

Next in order to Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, *Patirrup-pattu* deals with Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭuc-Cēralātan, alleged to be another son of Imayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan and brother of Nārmuḍicēral. He is the hero of the sixth decad of *Patirrup-pattu*, the author of which is Kākkai-pāḍiniyār Nacceḷḷaiyār. The prefix

⁷⁵ *Patirrup-pattu*, 43. Vide *Purāṇ*, 316 for a poem in praise of toddy.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷⁷ The book has run to a Third Edition.

Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu to his name Cēralātan is apparently explained by the statements in *Patirrup-pattu* 56 and 57 that he used in the flush of victory to dance with sword held high in the field of battle.⁷⁸ The *Patigam* to this decad gives another explanation, namely that he recovered a herd of cattle, lifted probably as a prelude to war by a neighbouring hostile chieftain. We know that in early days cattle-lifting was a common method of inaugurating hostile operations in war.⁷⁹ Or perhaps, ஆடு here only means வென்றி or victory, as it often does in Śaṅgam literature. Naccellaiyār does not mention any particular battle that this Cēra fought; but her poem enables us to see that he must have been a great warrior, as he is described as பெருஞ்சினப் புயலெறையை and கற்றம் வளைகிசித்தன்ன நோக்கலை செருவகத்தல்.⁸⁰

Trade and commerce on a large scale flourished in the country. She mentions that valuable commodities brought into this Cēralātan's port were stored in godowns.⁸¹ There were so few needy people in his city of ancient fame situated on the sea shore, that the king used to send vehicles to other places to bring men that he might bestow gifts

78 Cf. வாளுவர்த்து போர்கனத்தாடும் கொ
(*Patirrup-pattu*, 56, ll. 4, 8).

79 Agam, 372. See also Dikshitar's *Studies in Tamil Literature and History*, pp. 229-30.

80 *Patirrup-pattu* 51.

81 *Ibid.*, 55. நன் கனகெறுக்கை தஞ்சும்பநர்

on them.⁸² Music and dancing were encouraged by him⁸³ and were richly rewarded. Many feudatory chiefs owed him allegiance.⁸⁴ His kingdom extended beyond the port of Naravu,⁸⁵ probably the Naoura of the *Periplus* or the Nitria of Pliny, which has been identified by Yule and others with Mangalore at the mouth of the river Nētravati. This is the first mention we have of Naravu in connection with the Cēras; and we may not unreasonably hold that Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan captured this sea-coast town. Perhaps, it is to this event that Veḷḷi-vītiyār alludes when she writes in *Agam* 45—

சடவெனவென்றித் தேவன்நீரெனவென
வானவரமுடைய.

She must have been proximate in date to Auvai who refers to her domestic history and, therefore, proximate also to Rājasūyam-Vēṭṭa Perunar-Kiḷḷi and Cēramān Mākkōḍai, and must have lived after Karikāla Cōḷa, as she pathetically exclaims that her fate should not be similar to that of Ādi-Manti, an alleged daughter of that Cōḷa; and during this period, no Cēra answers to the name or title Vānavaramban except Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan.

From *Puram* 65 and 66 and *Agam* 55 we gather that the Cōḷa Karikāl Vaḷavan won a battle at Veṇṇi, and the name of his opponent

⁸² *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸³ *Paṭiṇrup-paṭṭu*, 57, 58 and 60.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 58, IV *Paṭigam*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

in that battle appears as Cēramān Perum-Cēralātan in the colophon; and in a foot-note we are told that another reading of the name is Perum-Tōlātan. In *Agam* 55 he is called only Cēralātan. The identification of the Cōla and the Cēra mentioned in these poems has caused me much anxious thought; and though I once held otherwise, I now hold that the probabilities are that Karikālan is the well-known Cōla emperor, the son of Uruva-pahrer Ilam-Šeṭ-Cenni and the hero of *Porunar-ārṇu-paḍai* and *Paṭṭinap-pātai*, and the Cēra, Perum-Cēralātan is Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan. There is no doubt that the great Karikāla did win a famous battle at Veṇṇi, in which the Cēra, the Pāṇḍya and the Vēḷir chieftains were defeated.⁸⁶ *Agam* 246 is by Paraṇar, who has also sung of Uruva-pahrer Ilam-Šeṭ-Cenni⁸⁷ and Šeṇ-Kuṭṭuvan,⁸⁸ and the former was the father and the latter a contemporary and relation of Karikāla. I see no compelling necessity to postulate two Karikālas, each of whom won a battle at Veṇṇi against a Cēra. The Cēralātan that fell at the battle of Veṇṇi, where the great Karikāla won a signal victory, must have been proximate in date to Kuṭṭuvan; and Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan alone satisfies the test. If we be guided by *Kalingattuparaṇi*, Karikāla's victory at Veṇṇi must have been one of his late achievements; for

86 *Porunar*, ll. 143-48; *Agam* 246.

87 *Puram* 4.

88 *Paṭṭirrap-paṭṭu* V; *Puram* 369.

it was after his return from his northern expedition that he engaged the Cēra and the Pāṇḍya in battle and defeated them.⁸⁹ Probably these two kings and the neighbouring chiefs took advantage of Karikāla's absence from his territory in northern India, and attempted to portion out his kingdom among themselves; and hence the great battle of Venni that Karikāla fought against the confederate kings and chiefs. I am inclined to hold, therefore, that Āḍukōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan met with his death at the battle of Venni. Perhaps *Patirrup-pattu* 58, ll. 10-12 will afford some explanation for the alternative name Perum-Tōlātan.

The battle of Venni is of special interest, as *Puram* 65 and 66 mention a peculiar practice among famous warriors in those early days. We are told that the Cēra king while facing his foe in battle was pierced by a shaft which ran through his body, wounding also his back; and as a wound on the back was regarded as a blot on heroism, the Cēra sat facing north and courted death by starvation. Starvation unto death as a penance has always been regarded in India, especially in ancient times, as an act of supreme fortitude and merit; and by this act the Cēra wiped out the humiliation that the wound on the back implied. *Agam* 55 shows that the act evoked the sympathy and admiration of several people who also gave up their

⁸⁹ *Kalīnga*, 183.

life along with him; and brilliant as his victory was, Karikāla seems to have felt that the heroism of the vanquished Cēra's self-immolation surpassed his own as the victor of the day, and he had to be consoled with the assurance that the Cēra king was not greater than he in glory.⁹⁰

Naccellaiyār was richly rewarded with gold for jewels by Āḍu-kōtpāṭṭu Cēralātan, and he further took her to himself. He is stated to have reigned for thirty-eight years.



CHAPTER II.

S. I. *Karuvār-Ēṇiya Kō-perum-cēral* *Irumpoṇai.*

At this stage a digression into *Pura-nānūru* appears necessary. The Cēra Kings we have considered so far are, according to *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*, descendants of Cēramān Perum-Cōṭṭu Udiyan Cēralātan. The remaining Cēra kings sung about in that work belong to another line of which the ancestor it is impossible to determine from that work. Before, however, taking up the consideration of the kings of that line celebrated in *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*, it is at this stage necessary, it seems to me, to speak of a Cēra ruler who is not mentioned in *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*. It will have been seen from the foregoing account that there was a vigorous expansion of the Cēra kingdom under the early Cēras. The work of conquest of the neighbouring territories and their annexation to the Cēra kingdom which began with Udiyan Cēralātan, the first Cēra king known to Tamil literature, was steadily continued in the reigns of his two sons Imayavaramban and Pal-yānoi Śelkelu-Kuṭṭuvan. The last of these kings completed the conquest of Pūḷi-Nādu or Konkānam, the territory of the Nannans, who as ancient Tamil literature shows, were war-like chiefs who rarely missed an opportunity to harass their neighbours. He had also annexed the land of the Kongar which in those early times was the

theatre of endless warfare among the three Tamil kings. Round about that region were numerous war-like tribes. In the circumstances, the Cēra, after the conquest and annexation of these northern regions, would as a measure of political wisdom and necessity, have thought of strengthening his position by establishing a viceroyalty in the north; and I suggest that Pāl-yānai Śelkelu-Kuṭṭuvan, conqueror of Pūli-Nāḍu and Kongu-Nāḍu appointed the first viceroy investing him with palatine powers, and sent him to the newly acquired northern province.

This consideration induces me to bring in here as contemporary of Pāl-yānai Śelkelu-Kuṭṭuvan, a Cēra king who, so far as the materials now available go, appears to stand unrelated to any other Cēra known to literature. He is Cēramān Karuvūr-ēriya Olvāl-Kōperum-Cēral Irumporai. This name occurs in the colophon to one single poem alone¹ which is by a poet, Nārivērūttalaiyār, who does not appear to have sung about any other king or chieftain. It is not possible, therefore, to state from literature alone where exactly this Cēra king should be placed. We shall find presently that there was a line of Cēras who bore the name of Irumporai; and in my view, the Cēral Irumporais who figure in Tamil literature, represented, perhaps a junior branch of the

1 *Puṇam* 5.

Cēra dynasty and were in the position of Cēra viceroys with palatine powers stationed in the North Cēra country with head-quarters at Tonḍi, after the Cēra Kingdom had extended northward. Oḷvāḷ - Kō - Perum - Cēral Irumporai may be regarded as the first of these viceroys of the north, as he is said in the colophon to *have gone to reign at Karuvūr*.^{1a} I take this Karuvūr to be different from Vañci, which according to me is Tiruvañcikaḷam; and I tentatively hold that Oḷvāḷ-Kō-Perum-Cēral Irumporai, as the first king of the branch, may be placed before Cēramān Antuvan Cēral Irumporai, mentioned in *Pāṭigam* of *Paṭirrup-patta* VII. We have no information about Oḷvāḷ Kō-Perum Cēral Irumporai except what is contained in *Puram* 5. He was apparently a great warrior, as the epithet *Oḷvāḷ* (bright sword) implies. It is easy to gather from *Puram* 5 that his lust for war and carnage was almost insatiable; and the poet gives him a timely admonition to turn to the prime duty of protection of his subjects. The poem may be rendered as follows:—

Lord of the forest region where, like herds
Of cattle, roam, among the huge black rocks
Resembling buffaloes, wild elephants!
Permit me—thou art great!—submit a word.
Detach thyself from those devoid of love
And mercy; they indeed, are marked for hell!
Be thou like parents who their children tend!
Protect thy land and people; 'tis worth-while!

1a *Puram* 5.

S. 2. *Antuvan Cēral*.

We may now pursue the study of the other decads of *Patirrup-pattu*. The *Patigam* to the seventh decad of *Patirrup-pattu* tells us that the hero of that decad was the son of Antuvan. His full name is Cēramān Antuvan Cēral Irumpoṟai.² There is a complete lack of materials about the activities of this Cēra. We can, however, say from the occurrence of Irumpoṟai in his name that he belonged to the northern line that began with Karuvūr-ēṟiya Perum-Cēral Irumpoṟai. I hold that Antuvan Cēral was, perhaps, the son and successor of Karuvūr-ēṟiya Perum-Cēral. The only incident connected with him of which we can be reasonably certain, is gathered from the colophon to *Puṟam* 13, sung by Uṟaiyūr Ēṇiccēri Muḍa-Mōṣiyār. We read that, by misadventure, the Cōḷa, Muḍittalai Kō-Perumārkiḷḷi, entered the precincts of Karuvūr, which then belonged to the Cēra, on a rutted elephant; and the poet in this poem tries to dissuade Antuvan Cēral from falling into the mistake of regarding the entry as an act of hostility on the part of the Cōḷa King. This was a period when in the land of the Cōḷas, rival chiefs or clans, the Cenni and the Killis, were striving to extend their territory with a view to gain supremacy over the whole Cōḷa Kingdom. Sometimes as a diversion from their internal feuds and fights, a Cenni

2 *Puṟam* 13.

now or a Kilī at another time led a raid into the neighbouring Cēra Kingdom; and Antuvan Cēral had, therefore, good reason for his mistake, if mistake it really was.

However, another predatory invasion of the Cēra territory seems to have been led by Neytalankānai Iḷam-Ṣeṭ-Cenni, probably a contemporary in the Cenni line of Muḍittalai Perunar-Kilī. We cannot affirm whether this Cenni was the same as Uruvapahrer Iḷam-Ṣeṭ-Cenni or was different from him; probably they were the same. The invading Cenni succeeded in capturing Pamalūr, which belonged to the Cēra;³ and this act of war naturally led to retaliation by the Cēra who advanced into the territory of the Cōḷa. The Cēra and the Cōḷa met in battle at Pōr,⁴ a place in the Cōḷa territory in the basin of the Kāvēri;⁵ and both the royal combatants met with their death in that battle.⁶ These two kings are said in the colophon to have been Cēramān Kuḍakko Neḍum-Cēralātan and Cōḷan Velpahradakkai Peru-Viṇaṭ-Kilī, who had an *alias* Perunar-Kilī. Possibly Velpahradakkai Perunar-Kilī and Muḍittalai Perunar-Kilī are the same; and the Cēra may be taken to be Antuvan Cēral, who was undoubtedly a contemporary of that Cōḷa. In this view, we may hold that Antuvan Cēral

3 *Puram* 203.

4 *Ibid.*, 62; 63.

5 *Agam* 186; 326.

6 *Puram* 62; 63.

also went by the name of Neḍum-Cēralātan at least in the latter part of his reign. We do not know how long his reign lasted.

S. 3. *Śelvak-kaḍunkō-vāḷiyātan.*

The next king we read of is his son, Śelvak-Kaḍunkō-vāḷiyātan, the hero of the seventh decad of *Patirrup-pattu*, which was sung by Kapilar, one of the greatest of the Śangam poets. It is recorded that this king won a victory over the combined armies of the Cōla and the Pāṇḍya;⁷ and he was in such plentitude of power, that soon he had no enemy anywhere.⁸ His country was very prosperous; and there was pearl fishery in his sea ports.⁹ Kapilar went to his court after the demise of Pāri, whose name has come to be a by-word in Tamil literature to denote a most munificent patron of literature and art. What Maccenas was to Virgil and Horace, that Pāri was to Kapilar, who was his staunch and faithful friend and admirer. Kapilar says this Cēra King rivalled Pāri in munificence;¹⁰ and his bountifulness, says Paraṇar, became a by-word.¹¹ The poet exultantly exclaims: "There are many kings; but what benefit do we derive from them? If bards appear even on the outskirts of your capital

7 *Patirrup-pattu* 63; also 85.

8 *Ibid.*, 69.

9 *Ibid.*, 67.

10 *Ibid.*, 61.

11 *Agam* 142.

city, it is your command they should be liberally rewarded, and they should not be put to the trouble of even seeing you. You shower ambrosia even more profusely than the clouds pour down rain.¹² Whatever may happen, your word remains unshakeable. Foes who have won renown in battle with others, gladly bow to you, regarding it as a privilege; and your benign love and generosity to them are unlimited.¹³ He held Brahmanas in great respect.¹⁴ The *Patirrup-pattu* tells us that at the close of a *Yāga* he dedicated, as a gift, Okantur, a village, to Viṣṇu, the deity he worshipped. He rewarded Kapilar beyond the dreams of avarice. We are told that the poet was given 100,000 gold pieces or coins, and all the land that one could see from the top of a hill. Apparently this gift of land is not a myth; for we find Perum-Kuṇṇūr-Kilār, another Śāngam poet, exclaims^{14a} கும்பிணைக் கிலைம்பெய்த ஐந்தாம் டாண்டை which means, 'more numerous than the villages that the renowned poet Kapilar obtained'.

Śelva-Kaṇṇu Kō was almost an idol of the poets. Besides the VII decad of *Patirrup-pattu*, Kapilar has also sung two lyrics in *Pura-nānūru* about this Cēra.¹⁵ In *Puraṁ* 8 the king is extolled as transcending the sun and the moon

12 *Patirrup-pattu* 64.

13 *Ibid.*, 63.

14 *Ibid.*, 63, l.1.

14a *Patirrup-pattu* 85.

15 *Puraṁ* 8; 14.

Like Muruga thou shinest, gracious king!
 Thy chest, as tough and broad as earth itself,
 Though threatening to thy foes, fills womankind
 With pain of love insatiate. Thy hands
 With constant kingly acts are firm and strong.
 While we, thy bards, who thriving on thy gifts
 Employ our hands in doing nothing else
 Than eating meat well seasoned in sweet smoke,
 Or rice with condiments and curry mixed,
 Have hands that are effeminate and soft!

Parapar too has sung about the unparalleled liberality of this Cēra in *Agam* 142, in language that reminds us of Māmūlanār's praise of Udiyan Cēral's bounty in *Agam* 65. He writes: 'Rejoice, O heart! like the suppliants who return from the court of Kaḍunkō, laden with largesse'. The king is there called Māntaran Poṛaiyan Kaḍunkō; and perhaps it is to the same king that reference is made in *Agam* 62 as Poṛaiyan, in *Agam* 303 as Paṣum-pūt-Poṛaiyan and in *Kuruntogai* 89 as Perumpūt-Pōṛaiyan. Śelvak-Kaḍundō-vāliyātan reigned for twenty-five years and died at Cikkarpalli.¹⁶ We learn from *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu* 67 that his territory included Koḍumaṇam, probably the modern Kolamam near Coimbatore.

S. 4. *Perum-Cēral Irumpoṛai.*

He was succeeded by his son, Perum-Cēral Irumpoṛai, a great warrior in whose praise Ariśil Kiḷār has sung the eighth decad of *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*. He defeated Kaḷuval, the

¹⁶ *Paṇam* 387.

Idayar chief,¹⁷ and won a great victory at Takadūr in Kollikkūrṟam against Atiyamān Elini and two great kings.

கொல்லிக்கூற்றத்து
பட்டையற்றனை அதிகமாரே
ஐருபெருமேயந்தரைபுருடனிலையென்று 17a

It is said that his conquest of Takadūr has been celebrated in an old Tamil work *Takadūr Yāttirai*, now missing. His fame as a hero spread so rapidly that soon princes and chiefs and others bowed to him in submission;¹⁸ and he spared the lives of his foes when they submitted to him and paid him tribute, 'even as spirits spare their victims when sacrifice is offered to them.'¹⁹ His sway and power extended so far that he was not only the lord of Kolli and 'the protecting armour' of the people of Pūli-Nādu, but he was even regarded as the lord of Puḡār.—

காவிரியைப்படிசெய்விரியனப்பிழை அந்நெய்வு 18b

His ministers were men of wisdom who made the good of the people their chief concern.²⁰ Both inland and sea-borne trade flourished in the land.²¹ The king performed *Yāgas* in accordance with the rules laid down,²¹ and the

17 *Patirrup-pattu*, 71.

17a *Ibid.*, 78, VIII *Paṭigam* and *Puṟam*, 230.

18 *Ibid.*, 75.

18a *Ibid.*, 71.

18b *Ibid.*, 73.

19 *Ibid.*, 72.

20 *Ibid.*, 76.

21 *Ibid.*, 74.

whole country was rich and prosperous.²² He was a great patron of learning; and the respect and regard with which he treated bards that sought him are exemplified by a supremely lovable act of high-souled magnanimity recorded in *Puram* 50 by Mōśu Kīranār. The poet's art yielded him in those days high praise and rich gifts, and made him a welcome guest in every court. Mōśu Kīranār, when he arrived at the court of this great Cēra King, found the latter had gone out for a hunt; and the bard, who was tired, fell asleep by mistake on the couch intended for the king's drum. The king discovered the poet sleeping; and with a greatness and nobility of heart that was beyond all praise, he not only did not disturb him but kept fanning him till he awoke refreshed! King and hero as he was, Perum-Cēral found light and life in the immortal song of the poet, whom he held in the greatest esteem. The colophon says that as reward he offered to Ariśil Kīlār, the author of the eighth decad of *Patirrup-pattu*, even his very throne, and everything of value in the palace, which the poet, wisely declined to accept; and the king thereupon made Ariśil Kīlār his minister. This king reigned for seventeen years. It is interesting to note that this king is addressed as *Kōḍai Mārba*²³ which means: he who holds Lakṣmi in his breast. It

22. *Patirrup-pattu*, ¶1.

23. *Ibid.*, 79.

must be after him that a subsequent Cēra came to bear that name.

S. 5. *Iḥam-Cēraḥ Iramporaḥ.*

He was succeeded by his son Iḥam-Cēraḥ Iramporaḥ, the hero of the ninth decad of *Paṭṭṇap-palla* of which the author is Perum-Kunṇur Kīlār. This poet had met with bitter disappointment once when he sought this Cēra's bounty.²⁴ I give *Puṇam* 210.—

Forgetting thy high duty to protect
Mankind, thou seest with eyes devoid of love
And helpful charity thy suppliants.
If other kings unsympathetic prove
Like thee, it would be best if men like me
Were never born! My pure and blameless wife
Devoted unto me, if there be left
Breath in her body, will be thinking still
Of me. Afraid am I if even now
Unjust and coward Death hath snatched her off!
I hasten home this instant her to save,
She hath, unable her distress to bear,
Been wishing oft in dire despair for death!
Live long, O King! Behold! Weighed down in heart,
I hence depart and carry back with me
My indigence, as helpless as the forts
Of foes that cannot stand against thy attack!

Later, the king and the poet understood each other, and the poet says: "I had thought that Iḥam-Cēraḥ was a fierce prince, as all had been lauding his great prowess in war. I now see I was mistaken. Having known him personally, I see he is as sweet as the waters of

²⁴ *Puṇam* 210, 211.

Vāni river.²⁵ Parenthetically, it may be observed that Vāni (Skt. Vāhni) is a river running north of Coimbatore, and is different from Bhavāni, and also from Ani-Vāni which is another name for the Periyār. He sustained the glory and munificence of his illustrious ancestors like Śelvak-Kaṇṭukō and the victors of Vāgai-parantalai and Viyalūr.²⁶ His land abounded in sandal wood, agil (*Dysoxylum malabaricum*) and sugar-cane.²⁷ He was the lord of Tonḍi, Kongar-Nāḍu, Kuṭṭuvar-Nāḍu and Pāḷi-Nāḍu.²⁸ He defeated Perum Cōḷa, Iḷam Paḷaiyan Māraṇ and Vicci, and destroyed the 'five forts'.²⁹ He was a brave, good, just and impartial ruler; and the poet pronounces in exultation the following benediction: "As the result of thy just and impartial rule, may the clouds never fail to yield bounteous rain! May there be rich pasturage for cattle; may the joyous birds thrive in groves; may fruits and edible roots be plenteous; may grain grow in abundance; may the whole land offer thee reverent praise! May good and virtuous men fill the land! Swerve not from thy kingly duty! May thy arms be victorious; and may thou and thy consort be blessed with long life, health

25 *Patirrup-pattu* 86.

26 *Ibid.*, 88, 90.

27 *Ibid.*, 87.

28 *Ibid.*, 88, 90.

29 *Ibid.*, IX *Patigam*.

and happiness." ³⁰ There can be no doubt that peace and plenty reigned over the land of this bountiful king. It is no wonder that Perum-Kunrūr Kijār asks his brother bards to proceed to the court of this monarch, where they would have liberal largesse bestowed on them. ³¹ Perum-Kunrūr Kijār ³² was most munificently rewarded with land, money and jewels for his poem by Ilam-Cēral Trumporai, who seems to have delighted in rewarding secretly. ³³ He reigned, according to the colophon, for sixteen years.



30 *Patirrup-pattu*, 89.

31 *Ibid.*, 87.

32 Perum-Kunrūr Kijār is said to have sung *Puram* 266 in honour of Uruvapahrer Ilam-Šet-Cenni (Colophon to *Puram* 266); but it seems to me the name of the Cōja is wrongly given there, and it should be Nalam-Kijār *alias* Šet-Cenni, who is also referred to as Ter Van Kijār.

33 Colophon of *Patigam* IX, *Patirrup-pattu*.

CHAPTER III.

Examination of Results.

This finishes the list of Cēras sung about in *Patirrup-pattu*. Of the Cēras we have so far considered, we can assert with confidence that Oļvā Perum-Cēral Irumporai, Antuvan-Cēral Irumporai, Śelva-kaḍunkō-vāliyātan, Perum-Cēral Irumporai of Takaḍūr fame and Ilam-Cēral Irumporai ruled over the northern palatinate with Toṇḍi as their capital; and we may similarly assert that Vānavaramban Uḍiyan Cēralātan, Iṁayavaramban Nedum-Cēralātan, Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan, Kalan-kāikanni-Nārmuḍic-Cēral and Śen-Kuṭṭuvan ruled at Vañci in the south. There can be no doubt that both branches were of the same family. Ilam-Cēral Irumporai, the last of the Irumporais celebrated in song in *Patirrup-pattu* is described as descendant of Iṁayavaramban and Nārmuḍic-Cēral as well as of Perum-Cēral Irumporai.¹ How the necessity for two lines of Cēras may have risen I have already tried to explain; and it may be remembered that Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan is also stated to have divided his kingdom among his kin. To which group should Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan be assigned? After anxious consideration, I have come to the conclusion that

¹ *Patirrup-pattu*, 88.

he should be regarded as a ruler of the northern palatinate which had its capital at Toṇḍi.

Let us try to examine the results we have obtained. We saw Imayavaramban reigned for fifty-eight years. He had a brother, Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan, who succeeded him and reigned for twenty-five years. Imayavaramban is said to have had three sons, all of whom are said to have been reigning Cēras. Of these three, Nārmuḍiccēral reigned for twenty-five years; and on his death he was succeeded by Śen-Kuṭṭuvan who reigned for fifty-five years. Supposing Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan was a son of Imayavaramban and ruled in Vañci, he must have succeeded Śen-Kuṭṭuvan; and even on the supposition that Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan was but a babe in arms when Imayavaramban died—and that is obviously all but impossible—he must have been at least one hundred and five years old when he became king, and thereafter reigned for thirty-eight years. This is palpably absurd. We may be told that, perhaps, the high eminence that Imayavaramban and Śen-Kuṭṭuvan occupied as conquering heroes, who made the military prowess of their armies felt even in North India, induced the ascription of an exaggerated period to the reign of each of these two kings; but this hypothesis alone would not help us to solve the difficulty; for even if we allowed the conventional period of twenty-five years to each king that preceded Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan, he must have waited

seventy-five years after his father's death to ascend the throne of the Cēra kingdom. If, however, we could possibly hold that one of the alleged three sons of Iṃayavaramban ruled at Toṇḍi, instead of regarding all the three of them as having ruled at Vañci, the difficulty would be almost entirely obviated.

I may here glance at a suggestion that the learned author of *Cēraṃ Śen-Kuṭṭuvāṇ* has made. He is inclined to hold that there were not only two lines of Cēras ruling simultaneously in Vañci and Toṇḍi, but there was also a third line co-existing with them that ruled in Māntai! He accordingly thinks that while Śen-Kuṭṭuvāṇ was reigning in Vañci, Nārmaḍiccēral was reigning in Māntai, and the Iṃṃpuraṇais in Toṇḍi. There is no warrant for this suggested disintegration of the Cēra kingdom into several small Cēra principalities. This was the time when the Cēra kingdom was growing into power, and stood in need of consolidation; and there was particularly a strong line of kings who were capable of keeping the Cēra kingdom intact, not to speak of further extending it. When for the elucidation of a difficulty, a hypothesis has perforce to be postulated, the hypothesis should be as simple and free from complication as possible. We know as a fact of history that there were two lines of Cēras, one ruling in Vañci and the other at Toṇḍi. If we can find authority for holding that one of Iṃayavaramban's sons

ruled at Toṇḍi and not at Vañci, the complication will be easily resolved.

Patirrup-pattu affords some material that would help us in this direction. The *Patigam* of sixth *Patirrup-pattu* says that the lifted cattle which Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan recovered from Daṇḍāraniyam, a place in Ārya-Nāḍu, was removed by him to Toṇḍi and he there distributed cows among Brahmans, to whom a village in Kuḍa-Nāḍu was also given. From this we may assume that Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan was ruling in Toṇḍi. This assumption receives support from the fact that he is associated with Naravu or Mangalore.² I have before postulated that Olvāl-Perumēṇṇal Irūmporai of Karuvūr fame was sent by Palyānai Śelkelō-Kuṭṭuvan as the first viceroy of the northern palatinate and that he was succeeded probably by Antuvan-Cēral as ruler at Toṇḍi. Of these two Cēras, little is known definitely. We do not know how long they reigned. In dealing with Antuvan-Cēral Irūmporai, I have suggested that his reign witnessed an invasion by a Cōla who succeeded in capturing Pamalūr, and that Antuvan-Cēral died in the battle of Pōr, which was fought against the Cōla. In the circumstances, a strong man was needed in the northern province to succeed Antuvan-Cēral, and I suggest that such a man was found in Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu-Cēralātan. Even if he be held to

2 *Patirrup-pattu* 60.

be the brother of Nārmuḍie-Cēral, I suggest that he was sent by his elder brother, the reigning king of the Cēra kingdom, to rule over the Tonḍi province, as perhaps, Śelvak-kaḍunkō-Vāliyātan was too young to succeed his father Antuvan-Cēral as ruler in the critical and troublous times that then existed.

This is not a preposterous suggestion. But, was Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭuc-Cēralātan, really the brother of Nārmuḍie-Cēral? Are Cēralātan, the father of Nārmuḍie-Cēral and Kuḍakkō-Neḍum-Cēralātan, the father of Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭuc-Cēralātan, identical? I venture to hold that they are different, and that while Cēralātan, the father of Nārmuḍie-Cēral according to the *paṭigam* of IV *Paṭiṇṇup-paṭṭu*, belonged to the Nañci line, Kuḍakkō-Neḍum-Cēralātan mentioned in *paṭigam* of VI *Paṭiṇṇup-paṭṭu* as the father of Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu belonged to the Tonḍi branch. In dealing with the battle of Pōr, I made the suggestion that the Cēra King, Kuḍakkō-Neḍum-Cēralātan who died in that battle was Antuvan-Cēral Irumporai; and if that identification be accepted, it makes it easy to hold that Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan's father was otherwise known as Antuvan-Cēral, that Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭu and Śelva-Kaḍunkō were consanguineal brothers of whom the former was the elder, and he naturally succeeded Antuvan-Cēral as the ruler of the northern Palatinate. On this hypothesis which does not seem to be violent, the following table of contemporaneous kings

in the two branches may be constructed tentatively.

Cēras of Vañci.	Cēras of Teṇḍi.
1. Perum-Śōṇṇu Udiyan-Cēralātan.	
2. Iṁayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan.	
3. Palyānai Śelkelu Kuṭṭuvan.	Karuvār Ēriya Perum Cēral Irumporai.
4. Kaḷankāḷi-kappi Nārmudic-Cēral.	Antuvan Cēral; Āḍu-kōṭ-pāṭṭuc-Cēralātan.
5. Śan-Kuṭṭuvan.	Śelvak-kaḍunkō-vāliyātan; Perumcēral Irumporai.
	Ilam-Cēral Irumporai.

CHAPTER IV.

S. 1. *Kuṭṭuvan Kōdai alias Māk-kōdai.*

For the remaining Cēras of whom we read in Śāngam literature, we have to depend mainly on the colophons appended to *Para-nānūru* lyrics; and our results can only be tentative. And first as regards the main line, we see from the fifth decad of *Patirrup-pattu* that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan had a son Kuṭṭuvan-Cēral, who was delivered by the former to Paranaṇ. Pandit M. Raghava Aiyangar makes a happy suggestion that this probably means that the king entrusted his son for training and literary culture to the great poet. Accepting this suggestion, we may conclude that on the death of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, Kuṭṭuvan-Cēral probably succeeded him. We find among the Cēramāns a king bearing the name Kuṭṭuvan-Kōdai; and I have little doubt that he is the same as Kuṭṭuvan-Cēral. Kuṭṭuvan-Kōdai is eulogised in *Puṇam* 51 by a poet called Kōnāṭṭu Eriecalūr Māḍalan Maturaikkumāranār. This poet has also sung of Ilavantip-pallit-tuñciya Naḷam-Kiḷli Śeṭ-Cenni,¹ the Cōḷa whom in the war of succession that followed the death of Karikāla, we saw Śen-Kuṭṭuvan helped to ascend the throne. This renders it probable that Kuṭṭuvan-Kōdai was the next king in the main line after

1 *Puṇam*, 61.

Šen-Kuṭṭuvan. If Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭuc-Cēralātan had reigned at Vañci, preceding Kuṭṭuvan-Kōḍai, Maturaik-kumāranār must have waited at least 40 years after he had sung *Puṇam* 61 to sing *Puṇam* 54; and this circumstance lends additional strength to my suggestion that Āḍu-kōṭpāṭṭuc-Cēralātan belonged to the Tonḍi line. Possibly Kōḍai's reign was not eventful and hardly counted in the way of wars and conquests. However it be, it is clear from *Puṇam* 54 that poets had easy access to his presence and that they were lavishly rewarded. This is not to be wondered at in a pupil of the great Parānar. It is my belief that Kuṭṭuvan-Cēral *alias* Kōḍai is identical with Kōṭṭambalattut-tuñcia Māk-Kōḍai, a royal poet, who like Hrothgar in *Beowulf*, 'the harp's sweet note awoke, and a song intoned both sooth and sad.' We have already referred to his poem, *Agam* 168, when dealing with Perum-Šorru Uḍiyan-Cēralātan. I give below an English adaptation of a pathetic lyric,² he has sung on the demise of his queen.

"What charm hath life hence-forth for me ?"

The king in his bereavement cried.

"My queen, how good and sweet was she!

The innocent of soul hath died.

My swelling sorrow knows no bound.

Alas! like to the common dead

I bore her to the burning ground

Where nought but spiny cactus spread.

A heap of fuel there arrayed.

Stood smould'ring her remains to claim:

2 *Puṇam*, 245.

With cruel hands my queen I laid
 Upon her couch of rising flame.
 My queen hath left me. Like the sea
 Though deep and surging is my grief,
 It has no strength, alas! to me
 From hated life to bring relief.
 Would that grim death had come to me!
 The fairest queen on earth is dead!
 The mainstay of my life was she!
 And I survive when she hath fled!"

S. 2. *Ṭam-Kuṭṭuvan.*

Aganānūru mentions as the author of *Agam* 153 one Cēramān Ṭam-Kuṭṭuvan. This Ṭam-Kuṭṭuvan or Kuṭṭuvan the younger is, perhaps, the son of Kuṭṭuvan-Cēral, the son of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan. Kuṭṭuvan is the name of the king; and the descriptive word Ṭam is prefixed to it to distinguish him from, perhaps, Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, the *great* Kuṭṭuvan. Except that he was a Cēramān or reigning Cēra, nothing further is known about him. The following is an English translation of *Agam* 153 attributed to this Cēramān—

My heart with grief and pain intense is filled!
 E'en when with sweet-voiced playmates she
pursued

The shining ball, tired out she used to feel!
 And now, cajoled by one hard-hearted, she
 Hath sudden yielded to his warm embrace,
 And with him left at night, deserting us!

How can her tender feet traverse the dry
 And trackless desert, where from bamboos tall,
 That in the wind against each other rub,
 Burst leaping flames, and to the mountain slope
 Convey her, where tall *Kongu* trees, which reach
 The star-bespangled sky, shook by the wind,
 Shed flowers honey-filled, like flambeaux flung,
 Which are too hot to hold, by hands away!

S. 3. *Pālaipāḍiya-Perum-Kaḍumkō*.

Perhaps next in order in the main line came *Pālaipāḍiya-Perum-Kaḍumkō*. As it is, *Pālaipāḍiya-Perum-Kaḍumkō* stands unrelated to anyone. We can see from his *Pālaikkali* that he was a friend of the Pāṇḍya, and the Pāṇḍya Kingdom was well-known to him^{2a}; and we see from *Paṇam* 11, perhaps the only poem sung about him, that he was the ruler of Vañci, and was a liberal patron of bards and minstrels. I give here an English rendering of the poem, the author of which is a lady named Pēy-makaḷ Iḷa-Vēyini.

The valiant king renowned in song, who rules
 O'er far-famed Vañci, rising to the skies,
 Where bashful maids with rounded arms that shine
 With glistening hair and decked with jewels bright,
 To images of sand make offerings
 Of flowers gathered from o'erhanging boughs,
 Before they plunge into the waters cool
 Of Poramai, he through the fortress broke
 Of valorous foes and made them turn and flee!

2a *Pāḷai*, 34; 29 and 30.

With jewels rare of burnished gold immense
 Did he reward her who his prowess sang!
 And on him, who her song accompanied
 Bestowed he lotus flow'rs of flaming gold
 With threads of shining silver closely strung.

In the scheme of succession that has been so far constructed from material supplied by ancient Tamil literature, there appears to be no room for introducing another reigning prince between Udiyan Cēralātan and Ṭam-Kuṭṭuvan. Pālaipāḍiya-Perum-Kaḍumkō is not an imaginary figure; but he was undoubtedly one of the ancient Cēra Kings who reigned in Vañci-on-the-Porunai. I had once suggested that he was anterior in date to Śen-Kuṭṭuvan; but on further consideration, I have come to entertain the belief that he was posterior to Śen-Kuṭṭuvan. He must be somewhat anterior to Nallantuvanār, the redactor of *Kalit-tokai*. Nallantuvanār has been sung about by Marudan Ṭa-Nākanār,³ who was a contemporary of the Pāṇḍya, Ṭavantikaippallit-tuñciya Nanmāraṇ⁴ of whom another contemporary was Nakkīrar;⁵ and Nakkīrar, as we shall see presently, has sung of a succeeding generation of Kings. I, therefore, propose to place Pālaipāḍiya-Perum-Kaḍumkō after Ṭam-Kuṭṭuvan. It is obvious that Pālaipāḍiya Cēra cannot be placed later, as it was at the instance of the Pāṇḍya King Ugrap-peruvaluti, that *Kalit-tokai* was redacted.

3 *Agam*, 59.

4 *Puram*, 55.

5 *Ibid.*, 56.

About the kingly exploits of Pālaipāḍiya Perum-Kaḍumkō, we have no record; but as I have shown elsewhere he has left an imperishable name as a Tamil poet. His poems, all of which relate to *Pālai-tiṇai* in *Agap-porul*, reveal the highest spirit of chivalry. In *Narriṇai* 9, he says that the gaining of the lady that one loves is like meeting the god one seeks. In *Agam* 185, he says that the man who leaves his love must be one with a heart of hard iron. It is pleasing to note in his poems the loyalty and tenderness of the wife, and the fidelity of the lady's companion. In *Agam* 267, where the lady's maid tries to comfort the lady, whose husband has left in quest of riches, the wife declares that if a husband leaves his spouse, it is due entirely to the inability of the latter to detain him with her. He frankly denounces the unsympathetic minister who misleads the king into deeds of injustice and oppression.⁶ It is clear from *Narriṇai*⁷ that the lighting of lamps on Kārtigai day was common even in those days, as he likens a tree in blossom to the appearance of a town illuminated on Tīrū-kārtigai day. In *Pālai I* he refers to the reaction of elephants to music, which has the power of soothing them. Toddy was a favourite drink in his day,⁸ and people believed in

6 *Pālai*, 7 and 9.

7 *Nar.* 202.

8 *Pālai*, 3.

omens.⁹ Women wore along with their *tāli* (தாழி) a gold jewel fashioned like or encasing the teeth of leopards.¹⁰

I have elsewhere given English renderings of several lyrics by this Cēra from his *Pālai-kali* and from *Kuruntokai*.¹¹ He is a master of Pālai-tīpāi. The appropriate motif of Pālai amatory poetry is separation; and it describes the effect on the wife when her husband proposes to go to distant lands across an intervening desert in quest of wealth. As an illustration of the royal poet's art, imagery and poetic imagination, I shall give here an English echo of the opening lines of his *Pālai-kali* and of a short poem by him included in *Kuruntokai*.

As blazed the wrath of Śiva, when to save
Ayan and other gods, who sought his aid,
He smote the dreaded, troublous Rākṣasas,
And their destructive triple fortress laid
In utter ruin, with like fierceness burns
The sun, whose heat intense beats on the rocks
And bursting them, with wreckage blocks the way
In that vast desert!

—*Pālai*, 1.

Great is my spouse's love for me!
His early coming I foresee!
Where he has gone, he eke will see
Ball elephant with gallantry
Break branches from the *Aṭṭi* tree

9 *Pālai*, 10.

10 *Aṅam*, 7.

11 *J.I.H.*, XI, Part 2; *Q.J.M.S.*, XXIII, No. 3.

And give them to its famished mate,
 It may its hunger satiate!
 That sight will speed him on to me!

—*Kuṟaṁ*, 37.

S. 4. *Mā-Veṅkō*.

Next, perhaps, came Cēramān Mā-Veṅkō, of whom there is mention made in the colophon to *Puṟaṁ* 367. We may gather from it that he was a friend of Ugrap-peruvaḷuti, the Pāṇḍya, and Rājasūyamvēṭṭa Perunar-kiḷḷi, the Cōḷa, whom I regard as the same as Neḍumuḍik-kiḷḷi mentioned in *Maṇimēkalai* as the Victor of Kāriyāṟu.¹² No other information is available about him.

We have no means of knowing who succeeded this Cēra at Vañci; but I hazard the guess that, perhaps, it was Cēramān Vañican whose capital is described as the unapproachable ancient city of renown, *Puṟaṁ* 398. We see from *Agam* 149, that a Pāṇḍya, probably Ugrap-Peruvaḷuti's successor, sacked Muṣiri, the port of Vañci and *Puṟaṁ* 373 records that Vañci itself was invested and captured by Kiḷḷi-vaḷayan. From *Puṟaṁ* 36, in which Ālattūr Kilār tries to dissuade him from his march on Vañci, we gather that the Cēra ruling then at Vañci was effeminate and afraid to take the field against the advancing Cōḷa. However, the Cōḷa advanced and Vañci-mūtūr fell, an

¹² *Maṇi*, XIX, l. 126.

event over which even a poetess of Killi-valavan's court, Mārōk-kattu Nappaśalaiyār, expresses grief in *Puṟam* 37. The fall of Vañci was obviously an event of great moment, and was unexpected; and in *Puṟam* 39, the same lady, addressing the Cōla exclaims: 'In what strains shall I praise thy great might and glory when thou hast brought down the renowned Cēra, whose ancestor had set the imprint of his bow on the long, golden peaked range of the Himalaya and whose impregnable capital city of Vañci has fallen before thy advance!'¹³ Killi-Valavan is said to have invaded Kūḍal also,¹⁴ and he is referred to as the Cōla of that name who died at Kuḷamuṟṟam. Dr. Pope thinks, and perhaps he is correct, that Kuḷamuṟṟam and Kurāppalli are the same.

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- 13 யாக்கன மொழிக்கோ யானே யோக்கிய
வகையனத்தறியாப் பொன்படு செடுங்கோட்
டிமயஞ் சூட்டிய வேம தீற் பொறி
மாண்கினை செடுந்தேர் வானவன் இறுவேய
வாடா வஞ்சி வாட்டு நின்

பீடு கெழு கோன்றான் பாடுங்காலே. *Puṟam*, 39.

- 14 *Aṟam* 346.

CHAPTER V.

S. 1. *Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy Māntaram-Cēral*.

We may now turn to the northern line. In that branch, the outstanding figure is Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy Māntaram-Cēral Irumporai, whom I would place some time after Iḷam-Cēral Irumporai; for before Māntaram-Cēral we must place Ātan-Avini, of whom Ōrampōkiyar has sung in *Ain-karunāru*, a Śāngam collection which was redacted at the instance of Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy Māntaram-Cēral.¹ Nothing is known of this prince; but we may be safe in regarding him as the immediate predecessor of Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy. Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy Māntaram-Cēral² is wrongly asserted by Mr. Kanakasabhai, in his '*Tamils 1800 Years Ago*' to be the son of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan; and this incorrect statement has unfortunately been repeated by Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar and others, and has found its way into a recent text-book of Indian History.³ He is an outstanding figure among the later Cēras of the Śāngam period; and we find as many as six poems relating to him in *Puṇānāru*. We can see from the poems that he was a wise ruler, beloved of his subjects who enjoyed peace and prosperity, and protection from external

¹ Vide *Ain*. 1-10.

² See my article on "*The Last Great Cēra of the Śāngam Period*" in Dr. S. K. Aiyangar Commn. Volume, pp. 217-21.

³ *Banerji's Junior History of India*, p. 94.

enemies. He was also a great warrior, and in his early wars he seems to have had uniform success; but we have no details of those wars.

Puṛaṇ 20 gives us a vivid description of this king; and I give below an English rendering of it as it shows how highly he was loved and adored.

The deep sea may be sounded; and the width
Of the vast earth, the air-pervading space
And eke the shapeless, overhanging sky,
May all be measured; but, O mighty King!
Thy wisdom, love and generosity
Defy all measure! Those who in the shade
Of thy protection live know but the heat
Of kitchen fire and of the glowing sun!
They only know the rainbow in the sky
But not the bow of slaughter! Nor do they
Another weapon know except the plough!
Illustrious King! Thy valiant foes thou hast
With mighty armies vanquished, and their lands
Their fruits for thy enjoyment yield! Thy earth
But pregnant ladies eat to satisfy
Their craving, and is never touched by foes!
In thy well guarded forts thy arrows rest;
And in thy sceptre righteousness resides!
What though new birds may come or old birds leave,
What-e'er betide, thou dost thy kingdom guard
And peace ensure. And so with anxious hope
The world doth pray no harm should thee befall.

In *Puṛaṇ* 53 we read that he won a victory at Viṭṭankil, though it does not appear over whom. He had also his reverses. Among his wars was one he waged with Talaiālam-kānattue-Ceṛuvēṇṇa Nedum-Śeṭṭiyan, one of the greatest kings of the Pāṇḍya dynasty; and in

that war, we learn from *Puṇam* 17 that he was made a captive by the Pāṇḍya. We read that his previous successes in war had been so constant that this reverse filled all with surprise. However, by his own strategy and valour he escaped, and the incident is immortalised in song in *Puṇam* 17, by Kuṇṁkōḷiyūr Kīlār. I give its translation below, as it supplies a good and interesting portraiture of the early Cēras, as also of Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy.

Scion of the royal house whose kings have ruled
 As undisputed monarch o'er the land
 Which from Kumari on the south extends
 To the high mountain on the north, and lies
 Between the eastern and the western sea!

Thy sires their royal sceptre even held
 O'er all their subjects whereso-e'er they lived,
 In hill or mountain, forest or in town;
 Protecting them with equal justice, they
 Chastised all wrong and, as their due, received
 The share of yield from land by law allowed.

O Topdi's lord! Thy land the mountain fence
 Protects. Its sandy beach like moon-light shines;
 There flourish stately palms which star-high grow,
 Laden with bunches of sweet coconuts.
 There spread extensive fields; and in the ponds
 Of water clear bright flaming lotus blooms!

E'en as a strong and stately elephant
 Regardless of the treach'rous pit whose mouth
 Is cunningly o'erlaid, impetuous
 Unto it rushes, and with tusks, full-grown
 And mud'rous, goes the sides and fills it up
 With earth it has dug up, and getting out
 Goes back and joins the herd in its old haunt,
 So thou, the victor in thy wars, whose foes

Bereft of their possessions how in fee
 To gain thy friendship or from polley,
 Urged by thy courage irresistible,
 Unmindful of thy foe, didst rush to war,
 And when, to the bewilderment of all
 Thy kith and kin, thou wert a captive made,
 By thy unaided strength and stratagem
 Thou didst redeem thy lapse and didst escape
 And to thy realm and relatives return.

O king of Kuṇḍanāḍ! I come to praise
 Thy valour and thy fame. Unlimited
 Is thy munificence! Thy warriors' shields
 For rain-clouds are mistook! Large swarms of bees
 Settle on thy war-elephants, which they
 Mistake for mountains huge! Thy battle hosts,
 The terror of thy enemies, are vast
 As the great sea to which the clouds resort
 For their supply of water! And the sound
 Of thy war-drums resemble so the roar
 Of thunder that dread snakes and venomous,
 Trembling with fright, hang down their hooded
 heads!

It must be noted that the battle referred to in this poem cannot be the well-known battle of Talaiālamkānam, which the Pāṇḍya Neḍum-Śeliyan, won against the confederate army of the Cēra, the Cōḷa and the five Vēḷir chiefs; for we learn from *Puṇam*⁴ and *Agam*⁵ that in that battle the Cēra, the Cōḷa and the chiefs that were their allies were slain by the Pāṇḍyan hero. We read also that in a battle

4 *Puṇam*, 76 and 77.

5 *Agam*, 36.

between Rājasūyam-vēṭṭa Perunar-Kiḷḷi and Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy, the latter met with defeat.⁶

His internal administration appears to have been a blessing to his subjects. Poruntil Ilam-Kīranār, who is one of the poets that have sung about him, says it requires a bard of the eminence of Kapilar to sing the praises of this king.⁷ Another poet extols him for his just rule under which his subjects enjoyed the benefits of peace, 'knowing no bow except the rainbow, and no weapon except the plough',⁸ and praises the Cēra kingdom as a heaven on earth.⁹ He was also a great patron of learning; and it was at his instance that *Ain-kurunūru* was collected. *Pura-nānūru* has a touching lament on his death which one of his bards, Kūḍalūr-Kiḷār had dreaded would happen as he had witnessed the falling of a meteor at midnight, when the planets and stars were in a particular conjunction.¹⁰ Unfortunately the astronomical details cannot help us to discover the date of his demise. I am tempted to suggest that he is, perhaps, the hero of the missing 10th *Patirrup-pattu*.

S. 2. *Kōk-Kōdai-Mārban.*

The next in that line will be Kōk-kōdai-Mārban. Poigaiyār, his court poet, tells us

6 *Puram*, 125

7 *Ibid.*, 53.

8 *Ibid.*, 20.

9 *Ibid.*, 22.

10 *Ibid.*, 229.

that he ruled at Tondi, and that his country was the sea-board region;¹¹ and though it was *Neytal* land, it also abounded in *Kuṟiñci* and *Marutam* land or rich forests and paddy fields. The poet Nakkīrar tells us¹² of an invasion of Kūḍal or Madura by Kiḷḷivaḷavan who slew Paḷaiyan-Māraṇ in that campaign, to the great joy of Kōḍai-Mārbaṇ. Possibly Paḷaiyan-Māraṇ, who we saw had been defeated in battle by Ḥam-Cēral Irumpoṟai, began to give trouble to the Cēra, whose power after the defeat of Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy Māntaram-Cēral by the Cōḷa and the Pāṇḍya had begun to wane; and hence Kōḍai-Mārbaṇ was rejoiced to see this troublesome chief defeated and killed by the Cōḷa. No details relating to this Cēra are available.

He apparently took his name Kōḍai-Mārbaṇ from his great ancestor Perum-Cēral Irumpoṟai.¹³

S. 3. *Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai.*

The next in order in that branch is Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai. Poigaiyār was his court poet. Mūvan, a chief who had incurred this Cēra's displeasure, was punished by having his teeth pulled out and fixed on the gate at Tondi as warning.¹⁴ Kaṇaikkāl Irumpoṟai does not

11 *Puraṇ*, 45, 49.

12 See *Agam*, 366.

13 Cf. *Paṭiṟrup-pattu*, 79, l. 7.

14 *Narṟiṇai*, 18.

stand alone in inflicting this mode of punishment; for we read of other similar instances.¹⁵ We do not know anything about his reign; but we have definite information about his end, which was very heroic. We gather from *Agam*¹⁶ that Kaṇaiyan, a feudatory and general of the Cēra, along with other feudatory chiefs owing allegiance to the Cēra, met in battle Paṇaiyan, the Cōḷa general, who lost his life in the engagement. This infuriated Śen-Kaṇān, the Cōḷa King, who marched against Kaṇaiyan, killed him in battle and captured Kaḷumalam, a city of the Cēra.¹⁷ Kapaikkāl Irumporai, the Cēra King, could not stand this, and naturally went to war with Kō-Śen-Kaṇān. At the battle of Pōr, he was defeated and taken prisoner by Kō-Śen-Kaṇān, and confined at Kudavāyil-Kōttam.¹⁸ It was on that occasion that Poigaiyār sang *Kaḷavaḷi-Nāṇpatu* in praise of Śen-Kaṇān, and won the release of his patron, Kapaikkāl Irumporai. In the meantime, Kapaikkāl feeling thirsty, asked for water which was not readily supplied; and he was so much stung by the insult that he preferred to die, rather than accept the water that the warders were so tardy in supplying. Before the order for release could be carried out, the proud and heroic Cēra had breathed his last;

15 Vide *Agam*, 211.

16 *Agam*, 44.

17 *Agam*, 270.

18 *Puram*, 74.

but he left a short poem, full of true epic grandeur, explaining the circumstances of his death. I give below a translation of Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai's swan-song.

Lo! Issue born but as a lifeless child,
Or even as a shapeless mass of flesh,
Amongst the kingly class with sword is clove!
But meaner e'en than these am I, confined
Like a chained dog, condemned to live in shame!
Can he be king-born who with his own mouth,
Too weak his body's craving to resist,
Begs for a cup of water from his foe?
'Tis better far to die than thus to live !¹⁹

We have now dwelt with all the Cēra Kings mentioned in *Paṭiṟrup-pattu* and *Pura-nānūru*. From the foregoing account, we are in a position to continue the line of succession in the two branches, from where we have left before.

Vaiñci Branch.

1. Kuṭṭuvan-Cāral or Kuṭṭuvan-Kōḍai.
2. Cēramān Ilam-Kuṭṭuvan.
3. Pālsipāḍiya Perum-Kaḍumkō.
4. Mā-Venkō.
5. Cēramān Vañcan.

Toṇḍi Branch.

1. Ātan-Āvani.
2. Yānaik-kaṭ-Śēy Māntaram-Cāral.
3. Kō-kōḍai Mārban.
4. Kaṇaikkāl-Irumporai.

Though we have no means of knowing the exact relationship in which each succeeding

¹⁹ *Puram*. There is a fine play in Tamil, bearing the title *Māra Vijayam*, written by the late Pandit V. G. Suryanarayana Sastri, based on this incident.

ruler in the above succession list stood to his predecessor, I think we may safely suppose the correctness of the above order of succession in either branch. Kuṭṭavan-Kōdai or Māk-Kōdai may be regarded as contemporaneous with Perum-Cēral Irumporai and to their period may perhaps be assigned Kāriyāṛṛuttuñciya Neḷum-Kiḷi besides possibly Cōḷa Naḷam-Kiḷi Seṭ-Cenni, Mā-Veṅkō and Yānaik-kaṭ-Šēy were both contemporaries of the Cōḷa Rājasūyamvēṭṭa Perunar-Kiḷi; and Kō-Kōdai Mārban was contemporaneous with Kiḷi-Nalavan, whom I regard as the same as the Cōḷa of that name who died at Kuḷamuṛram.²⁰ Lastly, Kapaikkāl Irumporai and Cōḷan Śen-Kaṇān were contemporaries. Thus the Śāṅgam works enable us to gain a connected account of the Cēras for about twelve generations from Udiyan-Cēral to Kapaikkāl Irumporai; and during all this period the Cēra dynasty had continuous social or political relation, the latter sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile, with the Cōḷa line of kings from Tittan's son, Pōrvaikkō Perunar-Kiḷi to Śen-Kaṇān. The statement found in some books that the Cēra ascendancy passed away in the course of one generation is wrong.²¹

20 *Puram*, 373.

21 E.g. Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar's *Beginnings of South Indian History*, p. 131.

S. 4. *Rule of Succession.*

In our account of the succession, the rule of lineal descent from father to son has been followed. Recently it has been sought to make out that the rule of succession followed among the Śāngam Cēras was collateral, not from father to son, but from uncle to nephew. This is a gratuitous attempt suggested, perhaps, by the prevalence of Marumakkattāyam succession in modern Malabar. When and in what circumstances Marumakkattāyam law of inheritance came to be followed in Malabar, need not now be investigated; but it is quite certain that succession among Śāngam Cēras was not regulated by Marumakkattāyam law. Mr. M. Srinivasa Aiyangar in his *Tamil Studies*²² cavalierly assumed that the Śāngam Cēras were succeeded by their nephews or sister's sons; but the assumption fell flat on the Tamil world. Quite recently, however, Mr. Somasundara Bharati of the Annamalai University has revived the story.²³ It seems to me that he has proceeded on a misunderstanding of the relevant texts in *Patirrup-pattu*. The portions bearing on the question appear in the *patigams*, and they are extracted below:—

1. உதியஞ் சேரநஞ்
வெளிபன் வேண்டாணல்லினி யின்ற மகன்

...
இமையவரம்ப னெடுஞ் சேரலாதன்

Patirrup-pattu, II *Patigam*.

²² See p. 103 ff.

²³ See *Sen Tamil*, Vol. XXVII.

Mān (மாண்) means *Magan* (மகன்) son. So the passage literally means: Imayavaramban Nedum-Cēralātan, the son born to Udiyan-Cēral by Nallini, the daughter of Veļiyan Vēl, or Veļiyan, the Vēļir chief. The translation of the second extract is: Nārmaḍie-Cēral, the son born to Cēralātan by Vēl-Āvikkōmār Paduman-Dēvi, that is, Paduman-Dēvi, the daughter of Vēl-Āvikkōmār. It was not unusual, and even today in the Tamil country it is usual, to place before the name of the daughter a surname denoting her father. In the preceding extract we have Veļiyan Vēl-māl Nallini. A classical example of this usage is supplied by the name of the authoress of *Paran* 83, 84 and 85, Perumkōļi Nāykan Maḡaḷ-Nakkaṇṇaiyār.^{23a} *Dēvi* does not mean here *wife* as it has been mistakenly construed; nor does it mean *daughter*, as contended by others. It is really a part of the name of the lady. The text in the third extract is apparently faulty as there is no lady mentioned in it, unless we take Maḡakkiḷli to denote a lady's name. Then Cōlan Maḡakkiḷli would mean Maḡakkiḷli whose father was the Cōla. *Śilappadhikaram*, however, tells us that Śen-kuttuvan's mother's name was Nareḡnai, and I

23a Cf. அஞ்சல் ஆதிகமகன் நரையயர்; *Agam*, 352.
சுழர்க்கேரெனயிற்றியர்; *Agam*, 163; 217;

235 and 294.

சுமிநீஞ்சுழர் தப்பசகையர் *Agam*, 160.

பொதுமடில் புல்லாளன் கண்ணியர் *Agam*, 154.

பெய்யகன் இளவெயினி *Puran*, 11.

would, therefore, insert *Naṛcōṇai* after *Maṇak-killi* to get the true reading. In the next extract *Dēvi* is the name of the lady, her father being *Vēl-Āvikkōmān*; and she bore a son, *Āṇu-kōtpāttu-Cēralātan* to *Neḍum-Cēralātan*. In the fifth extract *Poraiyan Perum-Dēvi*, the daughter of *Orutantai* bore *Antuvan* a son, *Śelvak-kaḍunkō*. Here *Poraiyan Perum-Dēvi* may either be the name of the lady or, as is probable, it may mean the 'Queen of the *Poraiyan*' or *Cēra*. In the next extract, the name is the same as in the second extract and the same explanation as that given in that connection will apply. The last extract says, *Maiyūrkiḷān Vēṇmāl Antuvan-Śellai* bore *Ilām-Cēral* to *Kuṭṭuvan-Iṟumporai*. It is clear that the name of the lady is *Antuvan-Śellai*, the daughter of *Maiyūr-Kiḷān-Vēl*. Reading the relevant portions, therefore, carefully, we see there is no warrant for saying that there is any trace in them to suggest that the succession was not linear, from father to son; but was collateral, from uncle to nephew.

In *Patirrup-pattu*,²⁴ *Imayavaramban* and *Ilām-Cēral Iṟumporai* are urged to rival the ancestors of their race and it will be difficult to believe that the ancestors whom they were exhorted to rival were not their paternal forefathers. Again *Śelvak-kaḍunkō* is addressed as

²⁴ *Patirrup-pattu*, 14 and 85.

முன் பிள்ளை முதலவர்போல நின்ற.

சகந்தேருர் பெருமகன்,²⁵ the illustrious son of great ancestors and Senkuttuvan is described as இயயத்து கரணவர் மருள மகன் விந் பூட்டிய கரணவர் தோன்றல்,²⁶ 'the descendant of the Cēra who imprinted the mark of his bow on the Himalayas', alluding to Iṁayavaramban. It will again be difficult to say that the references in these instances are not to direct lineage and ancestry. The advocate of Maṟumakkattāyam succession among the Śāngam Cēras would have us believe that Cēra women belonged to a matriarchal family, but they were freely married by Vēls and Cōlas, who were not Maṟumakkavaḷi people. The children born of these marriages had no right to their father's estate, but perforce took their uncle's to the prejudice of their uncle's sons, whose mothers might quite conceivably have been daughters of Cōḷa, Pāṇḍya and Vēḷir families. The Cēra's sons would, as a result, have no right in their parental family; nor would they have any in the families from which their mothers came, unless those families also followed the Maṟumakkattāyam system. And nobody will suggest that the succession among the Cōlas, Pāṇḍyas and Vēḷir was from uncle to nephew and not from father to son.²⁷

25 *Patirrup-pattu*, 67.

26 *Śīlap.*, XXV, ll. 1-3.

27 See also M. Raghava Aiyangar's *Cērañṭar Tāyvoḷakku* and V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar's *The Maṟumakkattāyam and the Śāngam Literature*, Z.I.1. Leipzig, IX, 3, pp. 255 ff.

S. 5. *A strange view of Patirrup-pattu.*

Before we conclude this account, which has been constructed solely from the Śaṅgam classics, we may just glance at a strange assertion about *Patirrup-pattu* in which a recent critic has indulged.²⁸ He says that all the decads of *Patirrup-pattu* or at least a good portion of it should be the work of a single author, and the redactor with no clue about the authorship, might have ascribed the poems to different poets. Or the redactor had a number of poems by various authors and he made a judicious selection and arranged them on a uniform plan. The marked difference in style, thought and literary execution that any one can easily see between one decad and another rules out the probability and even the possibility of the whole of *Patirrup-pattu* being the work of a single poet. If, however, it was the work of a single author, how was it that his very name had been forgotten? He could not have wantonly suppressed it. We are not told why a poet should have practised such a deliberate and calculated joke on the literary world. Surely his name and eminence as a poet would not have suffered if he had owned them as his; on the other hand, the indisputable merit of the poems would have at once won for him an enviable position of pre-eminence among the

²⁸ Vide *The Chronology of the Early Tamils*, by K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, p. 37.

ancient poets of the Tamil land. By the device that he has adopted, he has wilfully achieved obscurity; for even his very name is unknown. And was there even an absence of tradition about the authorship when the redaction was made? Speculations like this are unprofitable. Each decad has come to us as the work of a different poet; and the poems contain internal evidence to show that all the decads cannot have had the same authorship. Each decad professes to be a contemporary record of the achievements of its hero; and making full allowance for the predilections of court poets, one can still accept them as cogent contemporary documents, as there is not sufficient reason for questioning their authenticity.

S. 6. *Kēraḷōtpatti*.

I should say a word about *Kēraḷōtpatti*, which is regarded as the oldest account in Malayalam relating to Kēraḷa history. It, however, seems to me that to glean history from this work is as hopeless as to seek for a needle in a haystack. Some one has not inappropriately, though with unnecessary severity of language, described it as a farrago of legendary nonsense. It is a work of about the 18th century; and it professes to tell us the story of Kēraḷa from the time when at Paraśurāma's command the country arose from out the azure main. The floating traditions on which the narrative was sought to be built were unhappily

far too hazy to present any picture in perspective; and thus even as a source-book of early Kēraḷa history it cannot unfortunately be of any real use. It tells us that after a period of indigenous kings, who were generally incompetent, the people selected kings from the neighbouring countries and brought them to Kēraḷa, on the understanding that each was to rule for twelve years! These foreign rulers who were brought into the country were known as *Perumāls*; and the earliest of them is said to be one Kēya Perumāḷ, who made Allur or Kodungallur his capital. A suggestion has been made that this Perumāḷ is Perum-Śōṟṟu Ūdiyan-Cēralātan; but I see absolutely no warrant for this. It is said that after him were brought in succession into Kēraḷa, Cōḷa-perumāḷ, Pāṇḍi-perumāḷ, Cōḷiya or Kēraḷa-perumāḷ, Taḷubham-perumāḷ, Indra-perumāḷ, Ārya-perumāḷ and others! It is obvious that the author had heard of invasions of Kēraḷa by some Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa and other neighbouring kings or chiefs, who probably retired to their territory after their raid; and from that he wove this fanciful list of Perumāḷs brought by the people into Kēraḷa to rule over the country! Even upon a most sympathetic consideration of the legendary mass presented in the pages of *Kēraḷōtpatti*, all that has been claimed for the work is that it may supply materials 'to fill up some parts of the wide gap in the history of the country from the fourth to the ninth century

A.C.²⁰ The epoch we have been studying is, as will be shown later on, anterior to this period; and *Kēraḷōtpatti* cannot, therefore, be of any use for our purpose, even supposing it were possible to make it serve the purposes of history.



CHAPTER VI.

Vañci-mūtār.

S. 1.

Among the problems of ancient Cēra history, nothing is of greater interest or importance than the identification of Vañci, the capital of the ancient Cēra Kingdom.

Puram 11 conveys the information that a Cēra king, said to be Pālai-pāḍiya Perum Kaḍunkō, was ruling in Vañci, where the cool waters of the Porunai flow; and the scholiast, of whom unfortunately nothing is known, explains Vañci as Karuvūr, and Porunai as Ānporuntam. This has recently given occasion for learned disquisitions by some Tamil scholars,¹ who have tried to establish that Vañci is Karūr in the Trichinopoly District. That Vañci is Kodum-kolūr (Cranganore) of which Tiruvañci-kaḷam is a suburb, has been held as an undisputed axiom by Tamil scholars from the beginning; and the reasoning by which that view has recently been attempted to be controverted is more perplexing than convincing. I propose to state a few relevant facts of outstanding significance, that will help us in the solution of the question.

The close connection of *Śilappadhikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai* with the Cēra country and

¹ See for example Mahāvidyān R. Raghava Aiyangar's *Vañcimānagar*.

its capital city is well known; and it is worthy of note that, while they speak of Vañci or Vañci-mūtūr, they do not mention Karuvūr at all. *Patirrup-pattu*, which is devoted entirely to the praise of the Cēras, does not so much as even mention Karuvūr, while it refers to Vañci-mūtūr. The *Puṇānūru*^{1a} collection, which contains many lyrics in praise of Cēra kings, refers by name to Vañci; but it does not mention Karuvūr anywhere. Among the *Aganānūru* collection, two poems mention Vañci, and one mentions Karuvūr;² and this is the only instance in ancient poetic literature, so far as the published works of the Śāṅgam age go, of Karuvūr appearing in the text. In *Paripāḍal*, no mention of Karuvūr is made; but Vañci³ occurs, and is described as of equal importance with Madura, and Kōli (Uṇaiyūr). So too, in the *Pattup-pāṭṭu*⁴ collection, Vañci alone occurs; and its position in the Cēra kingdom is described to be of the same eminence as Madura in the Pāṇḍya kingdom and Uṇantai in the Cōla kingdom. *Kaḷavaḷi-nāṇṇatu* was composed by Poigaiyār to secure the release of Cēramān Kaṇaikkāl Irumporai, who had been made a captive by Cōlan Kō-Senkannān; and in that poem too, only

1a See *Puṇam*, 11, 32, 39, etc.

2 See *Agam*, 263, 396 and 93.

3 See p. 175 (ed. 1918).

4 See *Śirupāṇṇruppāḍai*, l. 59.

Vañci occurs⁵ and not Karuvūr. An examination of the Śāngam works thus shows that the ancient poets knew the capital city of the Cēra as only Vañci; and except in only one solitary lyric in *Aganūru*,⁶ they have not mentioned Karuvūr at all. Even this solitary instance need not be regarded as really an exception; for Karuvūr, as it occurs there, may be explained as a descriptive name meaning simply the *prominent or impregnable city*, and need not be regarded as a proper noun. That the city which was known to the poets as Vañci and was celebrated by them under that name was not Karuvūr of the Trichinopoly district, also seems to be clear from *Agam* 263, where Karuvūr Kaṇṇampālanār sings of Vañci as the capital city of the Cēra. Obviously Vañci and Karuvūr in Trichinopoly were regarded as two different places.

This is also seen from another fact we gather from ancient Tamil literature. That the Karuvūr region enjoyed the unenviable distinction of having frequently been the cock-pit of the Tamil country is patent from ancient works. Kongu-nāḍu was originally under its independent chief; but it afterwards passed into the possession of the rulers of each of the three Tamil kingdoms. *Patirrup-pattu*⁷

5 *Kaṭavali*, St. 39.

6 *Agam*, 93.

7 *Patirrup-pattu*, 22, 88 and 90.

shows that it once became subject to the Cēras. *Puram* 373 shows the territory had been conquered by the Cōlas; and *Agam* 253 shows that the Pāṇḍyas had also brought it under their sway. A place in such a region would obviously be ill-suited for the metropolis of a flourishing kingdom like Cēra-nāḍu. *Puram* 5 is sung by a poet called Nariverūt-talaiyār in praise of a Cēra, whose name is given as Cēramān Karuvūr-ēriya-Olvāt-Kōpperum-Cēral-Irumporai. This Cēral Irumporai must have *gone to reign at Karuvūr*, as his description signifies, from some other city which was the metropolis of the Cēra kingdom; and there can be no doubt that that city was Vañci. I have stated that the extensive conquests towards the north made by Udiyan Cēralātan, Imayavaramban and Palyānai-śel-keḷu-Kuṭṭuvan, the three earliest Cēra kings known to Tamil literature, necessitated the establishment of a viceroyalty at Karuvūr, which as frontier town was perhaps coveted as a key position; and this Cēral Irumporai, apparently a junior member of the house, went there invested with palatine prerogatives about the close of Palyānai's reign. From that time, the Cēral Irumporais of whom we read in literature probably occupied the position of Cēra viceroys of the north, with their seat of government at Toṇḍi, a sea-port town on the West coast; but the Cēra king himself had his capital at Vañci and not at Karuvūr. To avoid

all possibility of confusion from the use of the expression Karuvūr in the *Aganānūru* lyric already referred to, the early Tamil lexicons, *Pingalaṭṭai* and *Śēntan Divākaram* explain by a separate *sūtra*⁸ that Karuvūr denotes Vañci. That *sūtra* was necessitated because of the occurrence of the unfamiliar word Karuvūr in a classical lyric; but, perhaps, owing to that very circumstance, later generations in course of time came to give the name Karuvūr the same currency as Vañci, little suspecting that it might lead long years afterwards to confusion.

Another fact that we gather from ancient Tamil classics may also be noticed here. Karuvūr of the Trichinopoly district is, as every one will admit, in what was known as Kongu-nāḍu and not in Malai-nāḍu. The third decad of *Paṭiṟrup-pattu* is written by Pālai-gautamanār, in honour of Palyānai-śel-keḷu Kuṭṭuvan, the younger brother of Imaya-varamban-Nedum-Cēralātan; and one of the poems in that section⁹ tells us that the hero of that decad effected the conquest of Kongu-nāḍu. Clearly then, Karuvūr of the Trichinopoly District could not have been the original capital of the Cēras; for the Cēras, as we know from literature, had already, before the conquest of

8 *Pingala*, p. 86 and *Divākaram*, P. 62.

9 *Paṭiṟrup-pattu*, 23.

Kongu-nāḍu, established their fame and power as a ruling dynasty in the Tamil country. Again, we gather from *Agam* 29 that Kāri, the chief of Mullūr, slew Ōri, the chief of Kolli-malai, and delivered it to the Cēra; but Paranaṇar who has sung in honour of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan refers in *Agam* 208 to Ōri as still lord of the Kolli mountains. These circumstances will show that Kongu-nāḍu and the adjacent region did not belong to the Cēras originally, but they were acquired by them only later. All this clearly indicates that the capital of the Cēra kingdom, Vañci-mātūr, lay elsewhere than in Karuvūr situate in Kongu-nāḍu.

S. 2.

Though Vañci and Karuvūr had come to be regarded as convertible terms, it did not, however, mean that, in the conception of the Tamil literary world, the capital of the Cēra kingdom was not Vañci in Malai-nāḍu, but was Karuvūr in Kongu-nāḍu. The commentators, who came several centuries after the Śangam period, when they explained Vañci as Karuvūr, took care also to state that it was not the Karuvūr of the Trichinopoly District. Thus Aḍiyārkkū-nallār tells us that Vañci is Koṇṇikōlūr;¹⁰ and Mahāmahōpādhyāya Dr. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, to whom all lovers of

¹⁰ See P. 19 of the *Śīlap.* (3rd ed.).

ancient Tamil literature owe an immense debt of endless gratitude, writes the warning note that Karuvūr, the capital of the Cēra, is the city in Malai-nādu and not the Karuvūr situate in Koṅgu-nādu.¹¹ Šēkkilār, the author of *Periya-purāṇam*, states clearly that Vañci is Koṇṇukōlār, and that Karuvūr in Koṅgu-nādu is a town of the Cōlas.¹² The inscriptions found in the latter place are all Cōla inscriptions; and there is nothing in them or anywhere in literature that I know which attributes its origin and rise to the Cēras. When Tiruṭṭāna-sambanda sang a hymn in praise of this place, he called it Karuvūr-ānilai, obviously to distinguish it from Karuvūr or Vañci of the Cēras in the West coast. Modern Tamil lexicons, e.g., *Abidhāna-cintāmaṇi*, explain that Vañci is Koṇṇukōlār near Cochin. It is the place that Sundaramūrti has in his Tēvāram, described as 'Āñcaikkaṇam, of which Makōdai on the sea-coast is the ornament,' and which in his day was the capital city of his royal friend, Cēramān Perumāl, the well-known Śaiva devotee. Makōdai or Muširi in the seaport in the delta of the Periyār, the Tiruvañcāḷimukham of *Kēraḷōṭipatti*, and is a part of the ancient royal city which Lakṣmi-Dāsa

11 *Maṇimākalai*, pp. 120—1, 376.

12 *Tiruttōṇḍar Purāṇam*, *Velḷḍnai Śarukkam*, St. 28.

in his *Sukasamēdēśa*¹³ (c. 900 A.C.) calls Rājadhāni Mahōdayapuri, of which Tiruvañcikalām in the centre formed the royal residence. This ancient royal town extended from the bar at the coast to Trakanāmatilakam, about four miles inland north-eastward, the seat of a famous Śaiva shrine, now unfortunately destroyed, to which the temple at Guruvāyūr and other places were once subordinate. Another name for Trakanāmatilakam was Guṇapuri or Guṇaka apparently the Guṇavāyil of *Śīlapadhikāram*; and in his description of the place, the author of the *Sukasamēdēśa* employs in relation to the neighbourhood the expression *Kanakabhavana*¹⁴ which reminds one of the

13 *Sukasamēdēśa* was published about 60 years ago by the late Viśākham Tirunāl Mahārāja of Travancore in the J.R.A.S. The references given in this book are to the edition of the Mangalodayam Company, Trichur, in 1913. Śloka 68 describes Mahōdayapuri as follows:—

“उत्तीर्णत्तामुदधिदयितामुत्तरेण क्रमेथा

राजसतिद्विपहृत्स्थानीकिर्नी राजधानीम् ।

राज्ञामाज्ञानियमितनृणामानैर्सूरिधानां

राजा राजेत्ययनिषल्ये गीर्णो यन्निवेतः” ॥

Pūrvasaṁdēśa, Śl. 68 (p. 14).

14. “काम्याकतपः कनकभवने यत्र चोक्तान्तसीमां

भङ्गेकुर्वन् गगति गुणज्ञानाय इत्युदकीर्तिः ।

आस्ये गौरीकल्हमनुशङ्केष्व वेशङ्गनानां

वीथीभिस्त्राचरणविमुखश्चन्द्रलेखावतंसः ॥”

Uttarasaṁdēśa, Śl. 15 (p. 19).

Āḍaka-māḍam of *Śilappadhikāram*. It is interesting to note that, immediately to the north of Cranganore, the modern anglicized name for Koṇṇukōlūr, and forming its approach from the backwater leading to Ērnakulam, there is a place bearing the significant name of Karūr-paṭaṇa or as it is more generally called Karūr-paṭanam, meaning probably the salt pans of Karuvūr.^{14a} It is only four or five miles north of Tiruvañcikaḷam and this fact suggests that for some reason not now obvious, Tiruvañcikaḷam had also come to be known as Karuvūr.

These considerations lend strong support to the view that Vañci is Tiruvañcikaḷam. In *Śilappadhikāram*, we read that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan left Vañci-murram to go to the forests. It will be seen that Vañci-murram and Vañci-kaḷam have the same meaning. Besides, it is seen from that epic that, when Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was about to start on his northern expedition, *prasādam* was brought to him from a neighbouring Viṣṇu temple situated at Āḍaka-māḍam which, according to the commentator was the temple at Trivandrum or at Iravipuram. Trivandrum may be rejected as being far away; but Iravipuram was close to Tiruvañcikaḷam; for I am told that in a Malayalam Campu, *Nārāyaṇīyam*, (c. 1600) Tripunittura is called Ravigrāmam; and besides a portion of Ērnakulam still bears the name Iravipuram. It

14a Or does it mean 'the port of Karuvūr'.

seems to me, however, that we need not travel even to Iravipuram for the temple; for as I have already stated, within the limits of Tṛkanāmatilakam was *Kenakabhavana*, though unfortunately the place is now in ruins. Besides, *Kēralōtpatti* mentions in more than one place a *pon-māḍam* in Tiru-Kāriyūr,¹⁴ a place close by, which the late Mr. Kanakasabhai attempted to identify with the Cēra capital.

S. 3.

It has, however, been objected to this identification that the name of the place near Cochin is properly Añcaik-kāḷam as that is the name which it bears in Sundarar's hymn.¹⁵ No doubt, in Tamil Śaivite literature, Tiruvañcaik-kāḷam is the consecrated name for the place; but I cannot regard this insignificant difference in spelling as a serious objection. Place-names often changed in form, owing to various reasons; and the change here by no means presents an insurmountable obstacle. In two Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscriptions found in the Śiva temple at Tiruvañcikkāḷam, the name of the place is written as Tiruvañcak-kāḷam. Is it not possible that by a pardonable mistake *va* may have been regarded as *a* transformed, owing to rules of liaison or *sandhi*, and *i* changed into *ai* innocently in pronunciation,

14b *Keralōṭi*, pp. 46-7. (1890 Ed. Mangalore).

15 VIIth *Tirumurai*.

or from false analogy? We know that there is a tendency for Tamil place-names to end in *ai* (c.f. Urantai, Karantai, Tañjai, Nellai, Anantai, Mailai, Kailai). Thus *Tiruvañcik-kalam* may have in course of time been unconsciously changed into *Tiru-añcaik-kalam*. However that be, the objection appears to me to be too trivial for serious consideration. It may also be noted that, in the inscriptions found in the Śiva temple at this place, the name of the deity is given as *Vañculēśa*.¹⁶ For some reasons, which at this distance of time it is not possible to ascertain, *Vañci*, the ancient capital of the Cēras, also came to bear an alternative name *Karuvūr*; but, as stated above, it misled no Tamilian into believing that that *Karuvūr* was the town of that name in the Trichinopoly district. It may, perhaps, be that the alternative name of *Karuvūr* for *Vañci* was known even in the second century of the Christian era, as Ptolemy (circa 150 A.C.) mentions *Karoura* as the royal seat of *Kerobothras*. If there were evidence that, even in those early days, the name *Koṇṭukōlūr* had become current, then we might posit that Ptolemy's *Karoura* had nothing to do with *Karuvūr*, but was a corruption of *Kōlūr* in *Koṇṭukōlūr*. In the absence of such evidence, we may regard *Karoura* as a corruption of *Karuvūr*. Bishop Caldwell, influenced by the similarity of names, suggested the identification of Ptolemy's *Karoura* with

16 Vide *Travancore Arch. Series*, VI, pp. 191-2.

"Karur, an important town in Coimbatore district originally included in the Cēra kingdom",¹⁷ and this wrong lead which the learned bishop unwittingly gave has now been followed by some scholars, with what I am compelled to regard as misdirected zest. Possibly when he suggested the identification, Dr. Caldwell had momentarily forgotten that Pliny in his *Natural History* (before 77 A.C.) had mentioned Muziris as the capital of the Cēras. After stating that Muziris was "the first emporium of India", he said: "The station for ships is at a distance from the shore and cargoes have to be landed and shipped by means of little boats. There reigned there, when I wrote this, Coelobothros". A few years after Pliny, the *Periplus* (circa 89 A.C.) contained the statement that Musiris "a city at the height of prosperity", was "two miles distant from the mouth of the river on which it is situated" and was "the seat of Government of the kingdom under the sway of Keprobotras". From the language of the classical writers, there can be no doubt that the two places Karoura and Musiris were not regarded as essentially different. By Karoura Ptolemy denoted, perhaps, the interior where the Cēra's palace was, the present Tiruvañcik-kaṣam, while Muziris properly denoted Musiri or Makōdai, the commercial mart or port about a mile and a

¹⁷ *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*.

half lower down at the mouth of the Periyār—the Pēriyāru of *Paṭṭirup-pattu*¹⁸ or the Tiruvañcāli-mukham of *Kēralōtpatti* and the Pseudostomos of the Greek writers. The same fact that Musiri is the Cēra's capital and sea-port is conveyed by *Puṇam* 343 where we read: "Sacks of pepper are brought from the houses to the market. The gold received from the ships in exchange for commodities sold is brought to the shore in barges at Musiri, where the roar of the surging sea never ceases and where Kuṭṭuvan presents the rare products of the sea and the mountains to those that visit him".

S. 4.

If Vañci is Koḍunkōlūr or Tiruvañcikaḷam, it must follow that the river Porunai or Ān-poruntam could not be the river Amarāvati as has been suggested by some, but should be the Periyār which falls into the sea on the southern side of Koḍunkōlūr. Kōṭṭaimukku, which is the site of an old fort at the north-eastern corner of Cranganore, is washed by the river Periyār on the south. The river is mentioned and described in *Paṭṭirup-pattu* as the most important of the rivers in the Cēra kingdom. That Vañci is on the bank of the Porunai river is patent from *Puṇanānūru*,¹⁹ and *Śilappadhikāram*.²⁰ Porunai is apparently

18 Stanzas 28, 43, 88, *Agam*, 149, *Śilap.* etc.

19 Lyrics 11 and 387.

20 *Śilan.* canto. 29.

the Tamil variant Parṇi in Tāmra-parṇi, for which river it is the recognized name in classical Tamil; and according to the lexicons an alternative name for Porunai is Poruntam. Tāmraparṇi is, as is well known, a river of the Pāṇḍya kingdom flowing east-ward; and obviously to distinguish the Porunai of the Cēra country from the Porunai of the Pāṇḍya kingdom, the prefix *an* was sometimes added to the former. Thus we have *tan an porunai* in *Puram* 36 and *Agam* 93, meaning, the cool *Ān-porunai*. These are the only two instances in old literature that I have come across, where the prefix appears. It has been suggested that in these instances *an*, is perhaps, a mistake for *ār*; but it is, I think, a needless suggestion. The ancients may have thought that both the Tāmraparṇi and the Periyār had the same source; and, indeed, their sources are not far distant from each other.²¹ They both rise, to use the words of Messrs. Ward and Connor, "in the Alpine chain of the peninsula separating the Tinnevely district from Travancore"; and so both rivers come to bear the same name, Porunai; but to distinguish one from the other, the above particle was prefixed to the river in the west; and both *Pingalantai* and *Divākaram* mention a river Ānporuntam, besides Porunai

21 The Tāmraparṇi rises Agastya-malai, and the Periyār in Alitaimalai, probably the Ayirai-malai of the Śaṅgam works.

or Peruntam. I may state here that Lakshmi-Dāsa in his *Śukasandēśa*²² describes the river flowing near the Rājadhāni Māhodayapuri as the sister of the Tāmraparṇi. After the manner of Kālidāsa, Lakshmi-Dāsa employs a parrot as messenger to take his message to his wife at Tṛkaṇāmatilakam or Guṇapuram. The expression occurring in the poem for the river is Cūrṇi. Perhaps it is a variant of Cuḷli-āru, which is another name for Periyār, found in Śaṅgam literature; and there still exists a place called Cuḷli a few miles north of Kālaḍi. Or it is a mislection for Pūrṇa; for written in *grantha* characters, one may easily be mistaken for the other. I also learn that in *Śaṅkara-Vijaya*, wrongly attributed to Vidyāranya, Kālaḍi the birth-place of Śrī Śaṅkara is said to be situate on the banks of the Pūrṇa river. This work, I am convinced, is spurious, being not more than a century old; but I refer to it only to show that in a Sanskrit work written very long before the present controversy arose the Periyār bears the name Pūrṇa. We may also note the evidence of Tirupūnatura or Tirupārnaturai, the town situated on the holy Pūrṇa river. Tirupūnatura is the residence of the Mahārājas of Cochin.

22 *Pūrvasandēśa*, Śloka 65.

“सा चादौ प्रवहति सरित् सोदरी ताम्रपर्णा-
श्चूर्णी माहोदयपुरवपूजचूर्णीकृतोर्विः ”

Op. cit. (p. 14).

Accepting Ānporunai or Ānporuntam as an approved literary name for the river on which Vañci is situate, we have still no warrant for taking those names to denote the Amarāvati river. The name Amarāvati is unknown to the Śaṅgam poets, lexicographers, or the commentators. It is said that in *Karuṁṭṭu-Sthala Purāṇam*, a recent work by a comparatively unknown author, a line occurs in which Amarāvati is said to be otherwise known as Ānporunai; and on this statement found in a work of fancy or imagination, is rested the momentous conclusion that Ānporunai is Amarāvati. Another reason given is that *āmbhīram* means the mango tree; and as the *Piṅgalantai* gives *cūtam* as a name for Ānporuntam;²³ and as *cūtam* also means the mango tree, Amarāvati and Ānporunai are identical! I may add in passing that *Divākaram* does not mention *Cūtam* as one of the names of Ānporuntam. All the lexicons—*Piṅgalantai*, *Divākaram* and *Cūḍāmaṇi*—agree in mentioning Āni-vāni as a name for Ānporuntam; but it is significant that Amarāvati is not mentioned anywhere as an alternative name.

We thus see that the evidence alike of ancient and medieval Tamil literature, of ancient Cēra history and of approved and long established Tamil tradition points to the

23 Ch. IV, P. 99.

conclusion that Vañci is Tiru-Vañcikaḷam or Koḍum-kōlūr; and the recent attempt to unsettle this view by drawing a red herring across the track is, it seems to me, gratuitous.



CHAPTER VII.

The Date of the Śāṅgam Epoch.

S. 1.

What is the approximate date of the Śāṅgam period? The question has proved to be one of the greatest puzzles of South Indian chronology, if we are to judge by the bewildering diversity of answers given to it. Indeed, one cannot help thinking that the methods of investigation that have been pursued must have been vitiated by some radical defect, when one notices that all possible dates from before the first to the tenth century after Christ have been assigned with greater or less confidence to the Śāṅgam period. For example, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* informs us that the 'Augustan age of Tamil literature,' as the late Dr. Caldwell called this period, is to be placed somewhere between the ninth or tenth century and the thirteenth century A.C. Mr. L. D. Swamikannu Pillai and the officers of the Madras Archæological department tell us that we should seek for the Śāṅgam period in the seventh or eighth century A.C. Pandit Raghava Aiyangar of the Tamil Lexicon Office has attempted to place the Śāṅgam period in the fifth century A.C. Other scholars, of whom I may particularly mention the late Mr. Kanakasabhai Pillai, Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, and Mr. Srinivasa Pillai of Tanjore,¹

1 *Tamil Vacatāru* in 2 Vols.

have maintained that the Śāṅgam period should be sought for in the second century A.C. There are yet others who would look for the Śāṅgam period before the Christian era. The expounders of every one of these views are scholars of proved ability and established reputation; but obviously all of them cannot be right, and possibly all of them may be wrong. Each one has attempted to carry on research along his own line, and to state results independently of others; and everybody knows that the pursuit of special lines of investigation easily tends to beget prejudices, and in the statement of results it is not always easy to avoid the fallacies due to individual prepossessions.

In examining the various answers returned to the question, we should remember that a hypothesis, however high the authority for it, can have no significance, if it has no real connection with the facts which it is supposed to explain. Nor can the validity of a hypothesis be inferred from its agreement with a single fact alone. It is a rule of inductive logic that a hypothesis is valid in proportion to the number and variety of facts which it is able to explain. In other words, the guarantee for the validity of a hypothesis consists in the consistence of results. A hypothesis may be accepted as reasonably established, when a number of independent facts point towards it as the one conception fitted to bring them all into intelligible relation. It will be my attempt

here to test the various dates that have been advanced, and see how far they satisfy this rule.

S. 2. *The Ninth or the Tenth Century Theory.*

In spite of the high authority of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the view there expressed may be rejected as obsolete. That view was first stated about a century ago by the Rev. Dr. Caldwell, when the materials for the investigation of the problem were extremely scanty. In his article in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Dr. Rost repeated that view: and that article has been bodily reproduced in the eleventh edition of that work. When Dr. Rost wrote his article, the old Śangam works, excepting the immortal Kural, had not been made available in print; but since then, many of the Śangam works have been published, and much valuable research has been made; and it is strange that the literary and historical material since brought to light has been totally ignored by the editors of the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. How far out of focus is the date given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* will be patent if we remember that upon that view the Śangam age will be posterior by several centuries to the earlier Śaiva hymnists, Jñānasambandar and Appar, who were the contemporaries of the great Pallava Narasimha I, the destroyer of Vātāpi. The

late Prof. Sundaram Pillai of Trivandrum thoroughly exposed the unsustainability of this hypothesis in his "*Some Mile-stones in Tamil Literature*"²; and one can only express one's wonder, not unmixed with pain, that the error should still persist, and find its way into some works, intended to be of authority, like Frazer's *Literary History of India* and the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*.

S. 3. *The Seventh or the Eighth Century Theory.*

If the view expressed in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* may be summarily dismissed as out of date, the view expressed by Mr. Swamikannu Pillai cannot be dealt with so easily. He is a recognized authority on astronomical calculation; and it is with his assistance that the dates of many of the South Indian kings mentioned in inscriptions have been determined. The service that he has done to South Indian chronology is incalculable; and naturally, therefore, a date fixed by him as the result of astronomical calculation will *prima facie* command acceptance. And when to his personal authority, which is deservedly high, is added the fact that his date has won ready acceptance among the experts of the Government Archaeological department and some other scholars, his view would appear to be too well entrenched

² Published in the *Madras College Magazine*.
 Republished in the *Tamilian Antiquary* now defunct.

to be easily assailed. From certain astronomical data found in *Śilappadhikāram* and the eleventh *Paripādal*, both Śāngam works, he tells us³ that the former work cannot be anterior to 23rd July 756, and the latter must have been written after 17th June 634. The startling definiteness of the dates arrests attention, and tempts, not to say compels, acceptance. 'To beard the lion in his den, the Douglas in his hall' were, perhaps, less hazardous than to oppose Mr. Swamikannu Pillai on the question of an Indian date which he has fixed by calculation; nevertheless, with due deference, I venture to state that his dates in this matter cannot be accepted. To place the Śāngam period between the middle of the seventh and the middle of the eighth century would be to ignore altogether the political condition of Tamil India as depicted in the Śāngam works, and of the rest of India in that period as now known to us. From the time of Simhavishṇu (c. 575—600 A.C.) the Pallava supremacy was the most outstanding fact of South Indian history for nearly three centuries. The period indicated by Mr. Swamikannu Pillai is covered by the reigns of, among others, Mahēndra Varman I, Narasimhavarman I, Paramēśvaravarman I, Narasimhavarman II, and Nandi Varman II, all Pallavas of Kāñci; and during this period of Pallava domination, the Cēras and Cōlas and to some extent

3 *The Indian Ephemeris*, Vol. I, pp. 100-109.

the Pāṇdyas did not count for anything practically. The Śaṅgam works make no reference to the Pallavas at all; not one Pallava king, great or insignificant, is even casually mentioned in these works. On the other hand, a large number of Cēras, Cōlas and Pāṇdyas, with names some of which may be regarded as unpronounceable and almost forbidding, and many feudatory chiefs under them are sung about by the Śaṅgam poets.

It is significant that not one Pāṇḍya or Cōla king of the seventh or eighth century whom the inscriptions have brought to light is referred to in the Śaṅgam works, while they belaud the prowess and munificence of a host of kings and chieftains that ruled and exercised authority over the Tamil kingdoms. No one would have the temerity to say that the Tamil kings and their achievements detailed in the Śaṅgam works could be made to fit into the epoch of the Pallava ascendancy. These rulers must necessarily belong to a prior age. About the middle of the seventh century the Pāṇḍya king of Madura was Kūṇ Pāṇḍya *alias* Ninraśir Neḍu-Māraṇ, and the Pallava king of Kāñci was Narasimha Varma I; while about the middle of the eighth century, the Pāṇḍya and the Pallava kings were respectively Jaṭila Neḍuñjaḍaiyan Parāntaka, the donor of the Vēlvikuḍi grant, and the well-known Nandivarman Pallava Malla. The Vēlvikuḍi plates, the text of which was first published

by Mr. K. G. Sankar, in the *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, mention the Pāṇḍyan Mutu Kuḍumi of the Śangam period as a remote ancestor of Ninraśīr Neḍu-Māraṇ or as he is called in the grant, Māra Varman the victor at Nelvēli. This Neḍu-Māraṇ was converted to Śaivism by Jñānasambanda, whose date is now definitely settled. Jñānasambanda and his elder contemporary Appar, who is said to have converted to Śaivism the Pallava Mahēndra Varman, son of Narasimha I, have in their *Tēvāram* hymns referred to the Cōla king Śen-Kappān, with reverential devotion; and it is seen from the references that by the time of the two hymnists, a hoary and consecrated legend had become woven about the name of that Cōla monarch. Dr. Hultzsch thinks that even at the time of the earliest of the dynastic Cōlas brought to light by epigraphical research, Śen-Kappān must have been only a name; and we see from the Tiruvālangādu plates⁴ of Rājēndra Cōla I, that Karikālā Cōla 'of extensive glory' was an ancestor of the 'emperor' Kō-Śen-Kappān. All this indisputably shows that we should seek for the Tamil kings of the Śangam era long before the middle of the seventh century.

Besides, as already stated, the middle of the seventh century coincides with the date of

4 S.J.I., Vol. III, Pt. III

Jñānasambanda and Appar, and their royal disciples Ninraśir Neḍu-Māraṇ and Mahēndra Varman. Those were the days when the Jains were most mercilessly persecuted both in the Pāṇḍya and the Pallava country. It is difficult to believe that it was during this period of bitter persecution, that the growth of classical Tamil literature went on apace, mainly under Jain auspices; for everybody conversant with Śāṅgam literature knows to what great extent we are indebted to the Jains in that respect. The Śāṅgam age witnessed a predominance of the Jains in Tamil letters. The author of *Śilappadhikāram* was a Jain; while his brother, the Cēra King, Śaṇ-Kuṭṭuvan, was a Śaivite. It is patent that there was then perfect religious toleration, and the differences in religious belief did not break asunder the bonds of family; much less did they affect the amenities of social life. Again to look for the Śāṅgam period in the seventh and the eighth centuries will be to regard the Śāṅgam poets as contemporaries of the Śaiva hymnists and the Vaiṣṇava Ālvāra; and to do so would be to ignore the evidence supplied by the language, matter and verse-form and metre employed in the works of the Śāṅgam and the hymnal period respectively.

Apart from the historical difficulties noticed above, it has also been shown that none of the dates supplied by Mr. Swamikannu Pillai can really be obtained from the astronomical

data given in *Śilappadhikāram* and *Paripāḍal*. In a paper on 'The Date of *Śilappadhikāram*' which I published in 1917 in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, I showed that in spite of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai's emphatic statement that 756 A.C. satisfies all the astronomical conditions mentioned in *Śilappadhikāram*, not even one condition could, without very material alteration, be made to apply to that year. Similarly, in regard to 634 A.C. which that distinguished scholar has arrived at from astronomical data found in XI *Paripāḍal*, Mr. S. Somasundara Desikar of Tiruarur has examined its correctness in a series of articles contributed by him to *Śen Tamil*,⁵ the organ of the Madura Tamil Śangam, and demonstrated its inaccuracy. Mr. K. G. Saṅkar, in a learned contribution to the *Journal of Oriental Research*,⁶ has shown that on 27th July 17 A.C. the major planets were exactly in the positions attributed to them in the *Paripāḍal* text and there was also coincidence of lunar eclipse and Agastyōdayam, as required by the text.

Mr. Swamikannu Pillai seeks support for his date from the mention of a week-day—Friday—in *Śilappadhikāram*⁷; and there are others who say that the mention of solar signs in *Paripāḍal* and in *Maṇimēkalai* prove that they are late works. I have dealt with this

5 Vol. 20, pp. 182-188; *Ib.* 22, pp. 301 *f.*

6 *J.O.R.*, IX, pp. 148-155.

7 Canto XXIII, l. 135.

subject elsewhere in some detail.⁸ The argument is that India borrowed the planetary week-days and the solar signs from the Greeks at some time not earlier than the fifth century after Christ. It is said that the earliest known genuine instance of the use of a planetary week-day is afforded only by the Eran inscription of Budha-Gupta, which has been assigned by Dr. Fleet to 484 A.C.; and according to that great authority, there was no general practice of using the planetary names of days till the eighth century. From this it is argued that the composition of *Śilappadhikāram* may be as late as the eighth or the ninth century. In Vol. III of Dr. Fleet's *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, which contains the inscriptions of the early Guptas and their successors, besides the Eran inscription, there are only two other inscriptions, the Verawal inscriptions of 1246 and 1264, that mention a planetary week-day; would we be justified in saying from this that till the middle of the thirteenth century the people in the regions of the early Guptas and their successors were not familiar with the use of planetary week-days? As a matter of fact, the planetary week-days seem to have been known in India centuries before the fifth century. The expression *Vāra*, which imports a regulated division of the month, occurs in *Ātharva*

⁸ Vide *The Date of Śīlap.* (Madras Christian Magazine, Sep. 1917); *Solar Signs in Indian Literature*, (Q.J.M.S., 1922).

Jyotiṣha. In *Paithāmaha Samhitā*, which is said to be of the same type as *Vedāṅga Jyotiṣha*,⁹ Tuesday is said to occur. In *Gāthāsaptasatī*, which is attributed to Hāla Śātavāhana, and which Sir R. G. Bhandarkar thinks was either written by Hāla or was dedicated to him, we come across *Angārakavāra* ('Tuesday'). We have to place Hāla probably in the closing years of the first century B.C. or the opening years of the first century A.C. Āryadēva (c. second century) employs week-days. The *Hitopadēśa* mentions *Bhaṭṭāvaka vāra* or Sunday. In the *Vaikhāṇasa Dharmasūtra* (c. third century) *Budhavāra* or Wednesday is mentioned. Yājñavalkya mentions planetary days. The *Matsya Purāṇa*, which is regarded as the earliest of the *Purāṇas*, is not only cognizant of the planetary week, but also deals with astral theology, for a chapter is devoted to the worship of the Sun on *Ādityavāra*.¹⁰

In southern India, Tiruvalluvar, who is considerably anterior in date to the authors of *Śilappadhikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*, has a couplet in his *Kural*¹¹ which indicates the adoption of the seven-day week. One of Jñāna-sambanda's *patigams* in the *Tēvāram* collection mentions all the days of the week in their

9 Now published by Dr. R. Shama Śaṣtri in the *Madras Government Series*.

10 Ch. 70.46; Ch. 253.7.

11 செஞ்சுற்று செஞ்சுறென் காதலர் பாடி
மெழுகோலை மேனி பசுந்து *Kūṭal*, 1278.

order;¹² and it is clear from that passage that in the minds of the people each day of the week had a well-understood beneficent or malignant influence associated with it. As regards the solar sign, Baudhāyana, whom Prof. A. B. Keith places in the fifth century B.C., and Āryadēva (c. second century A.C.) mention the zodiacal signs; and so do also some of the Smṛtis. Even supposing that the planetary names of the week-days and the solar zodiac were borrowed by India from elsewhere, literary evidence shows that it must have been long before the fifth century of the Christian era. It has been conclusively established that there was extensive intercourse and traffic between India and Babylonia and Assyria; and the recent discoveries at Harappa in the Punjab and at Mohenjo-Daro in Sind, prove the existence in India in the remote past of a civilization and culture closely akin to those of the Sumerians. The borrowing, if indeed there was a borrowing, may well have been from the Babylonian or Chaldean astrologers direct; and that is the view of the late Shankar Bala-krishna Dikshit. In any event, India need not have waited till the fifth century A.C. to borrow this knowledge. Indeed Dr. Fleet himself practically concedes this when he admits in his article on Hindu chronology in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that

¹² வேறுபாடு தானி Pāṭigam, ஐயாபிது திவ்வன் செவ்வியம் புதன் வியாழம் வெள்ளி சனி பாய்கொண்டு முடனே யாசது நல்ல நன்னிலை நல்ல நல்ல அடிபார்க்கு யிகடுவ

some of the astronomical books perhaps postulate an earlier knowledge of 'the lords of the days', and other writings indicate a still earlier use of the period of seven days.¹³

S. 4. *The Fifth Century Theory.*

The fifth century has been suggested as the date of the Tamil Śaṅgam by Pandit M. Raghava Aiyangar in his scholarly monograph on *Cēraṅ Śen-Kuṭṭuvan*. His argument has been largely influenced by a mislection of the Samudragupta inscription on the Aśoka Pillar at Allahabad, for which Dr. Fleet was originally responsible. The text of the inscription as published by Dr. Fleet contained the words Kauralaka-Mantarāja, and Dr. Fleet thought that Kauralaka must be a mistake for Kairalaka, and he translated the expression as Mantarāja of Kerala. Following this interpretation, the learned Pandit cast about to discover what he thought was confirmation in Tamil literature of Samudragupta's supposed invasion of the Kerala kingdom. He equated Mantarāja with Māntaram Cēral of Śaṅgam literature, and noticing in an *Ahanānūru* lyric reference to a military expedition by *Vampa Mōriyar*¹⁴ he stated that the expression *Vampa Mōriyar* meant the 'new Mauryas' or Guptas. Unfortunately for this reasoning, Dr. Kielhorn,

13 See also my 'Solar Signs in Indian Literature' (*Q.J.M.S.*, 1927).

14 *Aham*, 251.

in studying the Aihole inscription, identified *Kanala* therein mentioned with the '*Kaurala*' of the Allahabad inscription, and pointed out that Kaurala was a misreading. The proper rendering of the passage was settled by Dr. Kielhorn and Dr. Fleet in 1898; and it is now understood by all that the reference in the Allahabad inscription is to Samudragupta's victory over the king who was reigning over the region round Kollera or Colair lake. Nobody has yet claimed for Samudragupta conquest of any territory, south of Kāñci; and Professor J. Dubreuil is of the definite opinion that Samudragupta did not advance south of the Krishna. However, this reasoning has now been given up by the learned Pandit, as in the second edition of his *Cēraṇ Śen-Kuṭṭuvon*, he has omitted his arguments based on *Vampa Mōriyar*.¹⁵

Some have sought to make out that Śāngam literature cannot have been anterior to the fifth century, as *Maṇimēkalai* makes a reference to the Gurjaras. The expression *Kuccara Kuṭṭigai*¹⁶ occurs in *Maṇimēkalai* but in my view it has been wrongly interpreted to mean 'a building in the achitectoral style of the Gurjaras'. I understand the expression to mean 'a hut fashioned

15 Vide my article on *The Kōṣar and the Vampa Mōriyar*, (*Q.J.M.S.*, 1924).

16 Cantō XVIII, l. 145.

or cut in a rock', 'a rock-cave'; *Kuccara* being a corrupt form of *Kudhra* (कुद्रा) a rock. The context seems to leave no room for doubt that this is the meaning. Prince Udayakumaran, in spite of Maṇimēkalai having become a Buddhist nun, lecherously seeks her in a *dharmaśāla* where she was serving food to the poor. She at once suspects him, and entering an inner apartment transforms herself with the help of a *mantra* into a strange lady, and then comes out. The prince does not recognize her, and after a vain search in the inner apartment, leaves the place. It is to denote this inner apartment that the expression *Kuccara Kudigai* is employed in the poem.¹⁷

It has also been sought to make out that canto 29 of *Maṇimēkalai* shows that, that work must have been written after Dinnāga; but this view has been successfully controverted by Professors S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri,¹⁸ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri¹⁹ and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar.²⁰

17 Vide my article "The Gurjaras and Maṇimēkalai", X, *Q.J.M.S.*, 186.

18 *J.I.H.*, VIII, 322 sqq.

19 *Cōlas*, I, p. 72.

20 *Intro.* to his *Maṇimēkalai in its Historical Setting*. Vide also my article on the *Date of Maṇimēkalai* in *J.O.R.*, Vol. iii. There is a comparative study of great erudition under the title *Niyāyap-piravēśi and Maṇimēkalai*, published as a serial by Pandit Tirunāṛāyaṇa Iyengar, the learned Editor of *Śen Tamiz*, in Vols. XXXII and XXXIII of the Journal.

S. 5. *The Second Century Theory.*

The theory that assigns the Śāṅgam epoch to the second century A.C. falls next to be considered; and if it explains, as I shall presently show it does, facts gatherable from the Śāṅgam writings in such manner as no other date so far considered does, no *a priori* consideration of the remoteness of the date should deter us from accepting it. I have already referred to the astronomical data found in two of the Śāṅgam works; and there is no reason to suppose that the authors of those works were only romancing when they mentioned those data. Taking the astronomical details found in *Śilappadhikāram*, I have pointed out in my paper²¹ on the "*Date of Śilappadhikāram*" that 171 A.C. will thoroughly satisfy the conditions in the text for the great fire that consumed Madura. In 171 A.C. Āḍi twenty-sixth was Friday; Kṛṣṇa Saptami ended and Aṣṭami began 25 gh. 43 p. after sunrise, and Bharanī star ended and Kārtigai began at 49 gh. 57 p. after sunrise. Thus twenty-sixth Āḍi 171 A.C. will fit in exactly for the fire at Madura; and if 171 be accepted as the date of the fire, then Śen-Kuttuva Cēra must be taken to be living at that time. Let us see if this hypothesis will satisfy other facts relevant to our inquiry. Śāṅgam literature discloses that when Śen-Kuttuvan was reigning, Musiri was a flourishing

21 Op. cit., *Madras Christian College Magazine*, 1917.

seaport, frequented by foreign ships. Pliny, who wrote his geography about 80 A.C., says that Musiri was unsafe for ships to call at, owing to the existence of pirates; but apparently that danger had ceased to exist by the time of Ptolemy who died about 161 A.C.; for he speaks of that seaport as a great emporium, which it certainly was in Śen-Kuṭṭuvan's time. Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was a king of great prowess; and one of the titled names Kaḍalōṭṭia Vēl-Kelū-Kuṭṭuvan or Kaḍal-pirakkōṭṭia-Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, by which Śangam poets refer to him is reminiscent of a decisive naval engagement, which, perhaps, resulted as already opined in driving away the pirates from the coast.

Again the value of synchronisms in fixing dates in Indian history is well known; and the matter contained in *Śilappadhikāram* affords scope for several applications of that method. That epic recounts that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan went on an expedition to North India, in which he was assisted by his ally Nūrravar Kannar, that on that occasion he fought a battle on the banks of the Ganges, where he was opposed by the combined army of certain "Aryan" princes, among whom Vijaya, son of Balakumara, Rudra and others are mentioned; and that, after defeating the allied Aryan forces he returned with a slab of stone from the trans-Gangetic region for fashioning the image of Kāṇṇaki—the *pattini-dēvi* or wife-goddess—which he intended to consecrate in a temple

to be built in her memory and honour. At the consecration which the author of the poem attended, the epic tells us that kings of various countries were present, and among them was Gayabāhu, king of Ceylon; and Gayabāhu, on returning to his country, ordered the erection of a shrine in honour of *pattini-dēvi* and ordained the annual celebration of a festival for her in the month of Āḍi. Now, nobody will question that for an invasion of the north by the Cēra King, the political condition not only in the other Tamil kingdoms but also outside Tamil India should be exceptionally weak and perturbed; and if we examine the political history of ancient India, there seem to be, so far as the materials now available go, only two or three periods when the Tamils could have marched into North India with any degree of success.

Going not further back than the third century B.C., we can state definitely that such an invasion could not have been possible in the times of Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusāra and Aśoka. It could not have occurred in Pushyamitra's time. It could have taken place between Aśoka's death and Pushyamitra's accession, perhaps; that is between 234 and 184 B.C. The period of the later Śungas appears to have been one of confusion; but the Śātavāhanas or Śātakarnis were already attempting to become powerful, and by the close of the first

century B.C., they seem to have supplanted the Kapvas, and in the early years of the second century A.C. Gautamiputra Śrī Śātakarṇi is seen from the Nasik inscription²² to have succeeded in defeating the Kṣaharatas and annexing their territory. So another date for the northern invasion might be found, after Pūshyamitra's long and eventful reign, possibly in the disturbed and confused period of the later Śungas and Kapvas, that is between c. 148 B.C. and the closing years of the first century B.C., provided the Andhras or Śāta-vāhanas would have presented no obstacle. After Gautamiputra Śrī Śātakarṇi (c. 109 to c. 135 A.C.) came Pulumāyi who is said to have reigned for about thirty years. He came into collision with Rudradāman I, the Śaka Satrap of Ujjain, who took from him most of the territory which Gautamiputra Śrī Śātakarṇi had won from the Kṣaharatas (Girnar inscription); but Gautamiputra Yajña Śrī (c. 173 to 202 A.C.) seems to have again defeated the western Satraps and recovered some of the lost provinces. Rudradāman's aggrandizement is held to have been about 150 A.C. and perhaps, between that date and the date of Yajña Śrī's accession, the Śāta-vāhanas were not powerful and could not have successfully opposed a southern army in its northward march. With the close of Yajña Śrī's reign, we enter on the third century

²² *Ep. Ind.*, VIII, p. 61.

which, in the words of Mr. Vincent Smith,²³ "is one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history, and almost every event of that time is concealed from view by an impenetrable veil of oblivion". In this dark century too an invasion of North India might have taken place.

The fourth and the fifth century of the Christian era is the well-known period of the mighty imperial Guptas; and as Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil observes, in his *Ancient History of the Deccan*, the fifth century is the century of the Vākātaka dynasty,²⁴ which, the learned doctor affirms, is the most glorious and the most important of the dynasties of the Deccan between the third and the sixth century. By the sixth century we are in the period of the powerful Pallavas and Chālukyas who, till the latter were overthrown by the Rāshtrakūṭas in 753 A.C., were striving against each other for the mastery of the South. It is clear that the political conditions in the fourth and the succeeding four centuries so far as now known were not at all favourable to an attempt by a Cēra king to invade Northern India; and there is no need to pursue our analysis further. Now if the fire at Madura occurred in August 171 A.C., and therefore Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was ruling then, how would it

²³ *Early History of India* (1924), p. 226.

²⁴ See Ch. IV. A reference in this connection may be made with profit to K. P. Jayaswal's *History of India*.

agree with the political situation we have been examining? The poem tells us that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan started on his northern expedition on hearing of Kaṇṇaki's apotheosis after the fire, and after he had ascertained through his spies that Nūṛruvar Kannar had promised to assist him and desired to maintain friendly relations with him. Nūṛruvar Kannar can be no other than Śātakarṇi; and we may conclude that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan and Śātakarṇi entered into a treaty for mutual assistance.

We learn from the poem that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan had been away from his state for thirty-two months, when he was on the bank of the Ganges. We may consequently suppose that about the beginning of 175 A.C. the Cēra king was occupying the bank of the Ganges. This synchronizes with the period when Yajña Śri Śātakarṇi would have been seeking the aid of a friendly power to regain from the Satraps the territory lost by his ancestor Pulumāyi. Thus if we hold that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was, during a portion of his long reign, contemporaneous with Yajña Śri, we will be able to explain satisfactorily his northern invasion, which, while it served the Cēra's object, must also have afforded material assistance to the Śātakarṇi in vanquishing the Satrap. We are told that at the battle of the Ganges, several northern princes were ranged against Śen-Kuṭṭuvan and his ally; and one of the opposing princes was Vijaya, son of Bālakumāra. I suggest that

Bālakumāra is Ptolemy's Baleokouros. I know that it has been suggested by some historians that Baleokouros was probably one of the Śātavāhanas. The surmise may be unfounded; but there can be no doubt that he was historically connected with the Śātavāhanas; and as Ptolemy mentions him in his geography as a contemporary ruling prince, he must have been in existence before 160 A.C. His son may well have been among the princes that opposed Śen-Kuttuvan at the battle of the Ganges. Yajña Śrī himself was according to the *Matsyapurāṇa*²⁵ succeeded by a Vijaya; but it is not stated how they were related. Can that Vijaya be the Vijaya mentioned in *Śilappadhikāram*; and if so, was he an usurper, or did he come of a collateral line to which, perhaps, Baleokouros or Bālakumāra belonged? Then, another of the princes that Śen-Kuttuvan defeated at the battle of the Ganges was Rudra; and about this time we have Rudrasimha, if not also Rudrasena of the Satraps, from whom Yajña Śrī must have recovered his lost territory. My suggestion is that the battle of the Ganges was fought by Yajña Śrī and his ally against the forces of the Satraps and their allies.

There is also another important synchronism that has to be considered; for, *Śilappadhikāram* informs us that among the various kings

25 Ch. 273, 15.

that attended the consecration of the image of *Pattini-dēvi*, Gajabāhu, the king of Ceylon, was one. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, Gajabāhu was reigning between A.C. 173 and 191. The *Rājavalī* says that Gajabāhu took with him some relics of *Pattini-dēvi* to Ceylon; and this lends material corroboration to the statement in the poem that on his return Gajabāhu ordered a shrine to be constructed and an annual festival to be celebrated in his dominion in honour of *Pattini-Kaḍavuḷ* or *Pattini-dēvi*. This account enables us to explain the hold that the tradition of *Pattini-dēvi*, the 'wife-goddess', has long had on the people of Ceylon, where as Dr. A. K. Commaraswamy observes²⁶ some of the images in temples that depict the old art of that island are those of the apotheosised wife.

S. 6. *Conclusion.*

Thus we see that 171 A.C. as the date of the fire at Madura satisfies the test afforded by a consilience of results; and we may therefore reasonably conclude that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan who was then the king of the Cēra kingdom must be assigned to the second century A.C.; and as according to *Śīlappadhikāram* he had been fifty years on the throne when he built and consecrated the temple of *Pattini-dēvi*, his reign must have begun in the first quarter of that century. It may be noted that the remarkable

²⁶ *J.R.A.S.*, 1909, p. 292.

concurrence of testimony between Śāṅgam works and the *Periplus* on the conditions of maritime trade in the Indian seas considerably strengthens this conclusion. The latest attempt to determine the chronology of the Śāṅgam is by Mr. K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, sometime senior lecturer in Tamil in the University of Madras, in his recent book *The Chronology of the Early Tamils*.²⁷ Mr. Sivaraja Pillai has scant faith in the historical sense of those who have worked on the basis of the Śen-Kuṭṭuvan-Gajabāhu synchronism, because forsooth *Śilappadhikāram* and *Mahāvamśa*, are likely to twist and pervert historical facts as the result of artistic and religious motives.

I have always held that the Śen-Kuṭṭuvan-Gajabāhu synchronism cannot be lightly rejected, simply because these two works are not professedly works of secular history. Such rejection of relevant evidence on *a priori* grounds is not sound; and the scientific inquirer must be prepared to accept light from whatever source it may proceed. The value of synchronism in fixing dates in early Indian history is well known. I cannot reject the Śen-Kuṭṭuvan-Gajabāhu synchronism as fanciful. Gajabāhu is seen to have been reigning between 173 and 195 A.C.; and we may reasonably postulate that the building and consecration of the temple was

²⁷ Published in 1932.

about 176 A.C. As Śen-Kuṭṭuvan had been on the throne for 50 years when he built the temple, he may be held to have ascended the throne about 125 A.C. In our present state of knowledge, I have no hesitation in regarding this as the 'sheet anchor' of early South Indian history; and I am strengthened in this view by the result arrived at by Mr. Sivaraja Pillai, who had conducted the inquiry along lines which he claims to be more reliable and less objectionable. I have already stated that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan helped Nalam-Kiḷi-Śeṭ-Cenni to gain the throne of the Cōḷa kingdom; and the synchronistic table accompanying Mr. Pillai's book assigns this Cōḷa to the period 100 to 125 A.C. Śeṭ-Cenni's period may as well be 125 to 150 A.C., for Mr. Pillai's date is only conjectural, after all. When we remember that in that table the conventional 25 years' period for each king is what is adopted, the coincidence between our results will be admitted to be remarkable. As the Śangam period did not obviously begin and close with the reign of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, but there were several generations of kings and poets of the Śangam age both before and after him, we may for the present hold as a safe hypothesis that the Śangam epoch covered the first three centuries of the Christian era. This is the view I have all along maintained; and this is the considered conclusion of the late

Mr. Kanakasabhai. This is also the view adopted by Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar and Prof. Nilakanta Sastri in their works and in the *Cambridge History of India*.²⁸



²⁸ See also Dikshitar, *Studies in Tamil Literature and History*, Ch. I.

CHAPTER VIII.

Chronology of the Saṅgam Cēras.

I propose to take 125 A.C. as the first year of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan's reign, and with that as the starting point ascertain, with the help of the materials at our disposal, the dates of Śen-Kuṭṭuvan's predecessors and successors.

According to *Paṭirrup-pattu*, the following kings had, before Śen-Kuṭṭuvan, reigned for the period mentioned against each.

Imayavaramban Nedum-Cēralātan	58 years.
Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan	25 years.
Kaḷankāi-kanni Nārmadiceēral	25 years.

So, counting back from 125 A.C., the year when Śen-Kuṭṭuvan's reign commenced, we see, Imayavaramban Nedum-Cēralātan must have begun his reign in c. 17 A.C., Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan in c. 75 A.C. and Kaḷankāi-kanni Nārmadiceēral in c. 100 A.C.; and if we, for the present, assign to Vānavaramban Udiyan-Cēralātan the conventional 25 years, which cannot, having regard to the character of his reign, be held to be an exaggerated estimate, that king must on this basis be regarded as commencing his reign in about 8 B.C. It must be confessed that the acceptance of these terms of years does present some difficulty. It may be asked: If Imayavaramban reigned for fifty-eight years, at what

age did his brother become king after him ? Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan must be at least about 60 when his reign commenced ; and his age must have been 85 when he passed away. Such ripe old age may be uncommon, but is certainly not unknown, as a reference to Kushana, Gupta and Pallava history will show. For instance, Kuzulo Kadphises ruled for nearly 55 years,¹ and was over eighty, when he died and was succeeded by his son Wima Kadphises who reigned for 30 years;² and after him followed the great Kaniṣka whose reign covered not less than 45 years. Nandi-Varman Pallavamalla reigned for nearly sixty-five years (715-780 A.C.) and his son Dantivarman, who succeeded him, reigned for fifty years (780-830).³ In recent history, we may instance William I who became King of Prussia in his 64th year and Emperor of Germany in his 74th year and lived to be 91 years old. The Ex-German Emperor William II, who ascended the throne in 1888, is now 76 years old. Frederick the Great of Prussia reigned for 46 years, and was 74, when he died. Queen Victoria reigned for 64 years and was 82 when she passed away. Edward VII succeeded her, when he was about 60 years of age ; and George V, the Silver Jubilee of whose reign was celebrated

1 Rapson's *Ancient India*, p. 185.

2 Sten Konow, *I.H.Q.*, III.

3 *Cambridge Shorter History of India*.

last year, passed away in his 71st year. The advanced age of Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan need not present any difficulty, and it would afford another very cogent reason for the institution of a viceroyalty in the northern province during his reign.

There is another difficulty which we cannot ignore. If Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was the son of Iṃayavaramban, he must have been, at the lowest calculation, over fifty years of age, when he became sovereign of the Cēra Kingdom; and if we accept the statement that he ruled for fifty-five years, he must have been something more than a centenarian when he died. Nor can we construe the statement in the *paṭigam* to mean only that he lived for fifty-five years; for that will give to his reign not more than five years' duration! The only resolution of the tangle that suggests itself to me is to take that Śen-Kuṭṭuvan was not a son, but was a grandson of Iṃayavaramban. I venture to suggest that Neḍum-Cēralātan in the *Paṭigam* of fifth *Paṭirrup-pattu*, means only 'the great Cēralātan', the king referred to being Kaḷankāi-kanni Nārmudic-Cēral. I do not forget the passage in *Śilappadhikāram* which describes Śen-Kuṭṭuvan as இமயத்து வரணவர் மருமகனாகித்
புட்டியவாளவன் தோன்றல். Here the expression
தோன்றல் need not necessarily mean son; it may denote a descendant. From the narra-
tion of Nankō-Adigaḷ's early history, where Dēvanti praises his self-sacrifice in favour of

Šen-Kuṭṭuvan, by 'taking holy orders' that the latter may become king, we can see that Šen-Kuṭṭuvan's father has only two sons, Šen-Kuṭṭuvan and Iṭankō-Aḍigaḷ, and the setting given to the incident there related completely negatives the existence of other sons. This to my mind, is significant as making it impossible that Šen-Kuṭṭuvan could be one of four sons of Iṃayavaramban, as is now usually believed. Two things are clear from this incident; and they are that when Šen-Kuṭṭuvan's father's reign was about to close, he had only two sons and immediately on the death of the father, one of the two sons and not the brother stood to succeed him. I propose, therefore, to regard Šen-Kuṭṭuvan as the son of Nārmuḍie-Cēral. At any rate, the construction I suggest will remove the almost insuperable difficulties we have to encounter, if we regard Šen-Kuṭṭuvan as a son of Iṃayavaramban, as is now usually done. If this interpretation is accepted, the duration given for Šen-Kuṭṭuvan's reign may be allowed to stand. Roughly then, Udiyan Cēral's reign may be held to have begun about 8 B.C. or practically at the beginning of the 1st century, and Šen-Kuṭṭuvan's to have terminated about 180 A.C.

In the main or Vañci line, we have seen that there are five kings after Šen-Kuṭṭuvan and in the absence of any material for ascertaining how long they reigned, we

4 *Śilap.* 30, II, 170 seq.

may provisionally regard them as representing five generations, and thus bring the story of the kings of that line to the close of the third century of the Christian era. In the northern line, we read about ten kings; and of these, we see from *Patirrup-pattu* that four kings reigned for 96 years in the aggregate. For the remaining six, even if we assign to each of them only twenty years on the average, their reigns may be taken to have occupied 120 years, so that practically we have the story of that line for over two centuries. As I have explained before, there is good reason to think that that line began in the later years of Palyānai Śelkelu-Kuṭṭavan's reign, that is, some years before the close of the first century A.C.; and so, we have the story of the northern Cēras also up to the close of the third century A.C. During these three centuries, the Cēras were brought into relation with the Cōlas and the Pāṇḍyās very often; and from the *Puranānūru* lyrics, we can identify most of them. The following statements give the pedigree, the probable dates and contemporaneity of the Cēras of the two branches, and the names of the Cōlas and Pāṇḍyās, whose periods more or less synchronised with theirs. It is needless to say that the tables cannot pretend to be strictly accurate; but they are the best that can be constructed from the materials, and are tentatively offered as acceptable.

Probable Genealogy and Chronology.

CĒRAS OF VAŅCI

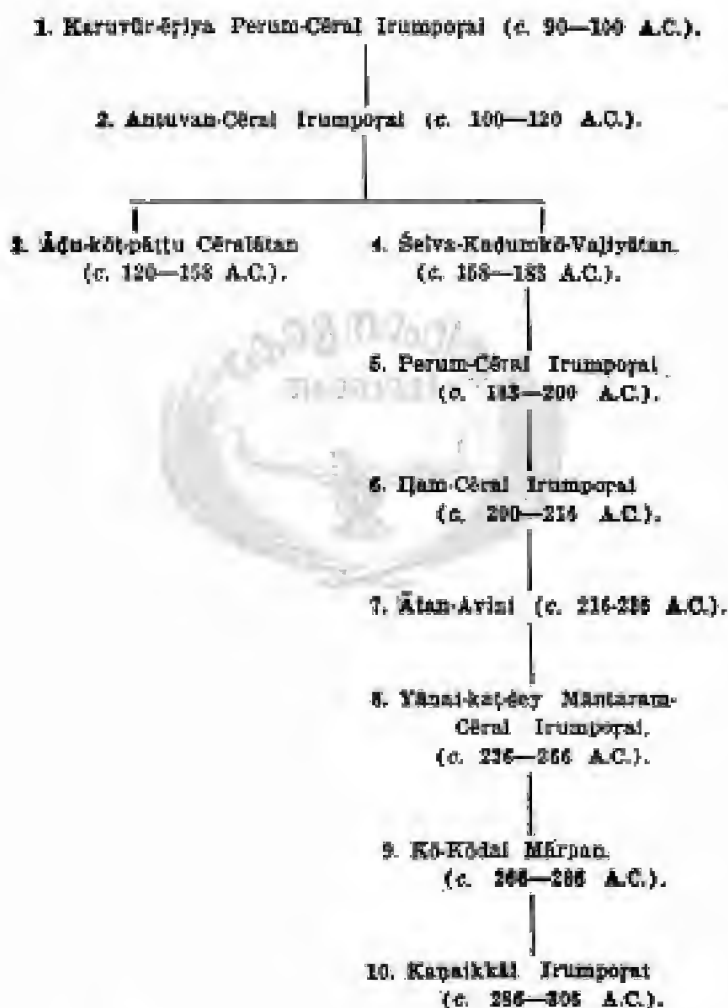
1. Vānavaramban.

Udliyan-Cēral. (c. 17 A.C.).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2. Imayavaramban. (c. 17—75 A.C.).</p> <p>4. Nērmudic-Cēral. (c. 100—125 A.C.).</p> <p>5. Śen-Kuṭṭuvan. (c. 125—180 A.C.).</p> <p>6. Kuṭṭuvan-Kōdal. (c. 180—205 A.C.).</p> <p>7. Ilam-Kuṭṭuvan. (c. 205—230 A.C.).</p> <p>8. Pālaipāḍiya Perum-Kaḍumkō.
(c. 230—255 A.C.).</p> <p>9. Mā-Veṅkō. (c. 255—280 A.C.).</p> <p>10. Vañcan.⁵ (c. 280—305 A.C.).</p> | <p>3. Pulpānai Śelkeḷu
Kuṭṭuvan.
(c. 75—100 A.C.).</p> |
|---|--|

5 Does Cēramēn Vañcan simply mean the Cēramēn who ruled at Vañci? If so, the name of this Cēramēn is missing.

CĒRAS OF TONDI LINE



Cēras of Vañci.	Cēras of Toṇḍi.
1. Vānavaramban Uḍiyan-Cēral
2. Imayavaramban Neḍum-Cēralātan
3. Palyānai Śelkeḷu- Kuṭṭuvan ..	1. Karuvūrēṇiya Perum-Cēral ..
4. Nārmuḍic-Cēral ..	{ 2. Antuvan-Cēral. 3. Āḍukōṭpāṭṭu Cēralātan ..
5. Śen-Kuṭṭuvan ..	4. Śelvak-Kaḍumkō Vāḷi-Ātan
6. Kuṭṭuvan Kōḍai or Mā-Kōḍai ..	5. Perum-Cēral Irumporai ..
7. Ilam-Kuṭṭuvan ..	6. Ilam-Cēral Irumporai ..
8. Pālaipāḍiya Perum- Kaḍumkō ..	{ 7. Ātan Avini .. 8. Yānaikaṭṭēy Māntaran- Cēral ..
9. Mā-Vēṇkō
10. Vañcan ..	9. Kōḍai-Mārpan ..
	10. Kapaikkāl Irumporai ..

Cōlas.	Pāṇḍyas.
Pōrvaikkō Peru-Narṅilli.	..
..	..
..	..
Muḍittalai Kōperu- narṅilli Uruvapahrēr Iḷam-ṣet- Cenni
Karikāla Cōla .. Nalamkiḷḷi Ṣet-Cenni ..	Ariyappaḍai Kaḍanta, Neḍuṅjeliyan.
.. ..	Vērrivēṛ Ṣeliyan.
.. ..	Iḷavantikaippalli- tuñcia Nan-Māran.
.. ..	Talaiślam Kānattu Neḍuṅjeliyan.
Rājasūyam Vēṭṭa Perunarṅilli ..	Ugra-Peruvaluti.
Kuḷamurṟattutuñciya Kiḷḷi Vaḷavan
Ṣen-Kaṇṇān

CHAPTER IX.

Political, Social and Religious Background.

S. 1.

We have now pieced together the story of the earliest Cēra kings known to Tamil literature. The antiquity of the Cēra kingdom is beyond dispute. From the occurrence of *Cēra-pādaḥ* in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar concludes that the Cēra country had even in that long distant past come under the influence of Brahmanical or Aryan rites and rituals,¹ and he cites the authority of Prof. A. B. Keith for construing the expression as relating to the Cēras. Perhaps this is doubtful, as Sāyana takes Cēra to mean *snake*. Leaving this aside, as also the evidence of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, we have in more recent times inscriptional evidence of the existence of an independent Cēra kingdom afforded by the Girnar inscription of Aśoka of c. 250 B.C. which mentions the country of Kēraḷaputra as one of the southern kingdoms. With one possible exception, Tamil literature, however, does not take us to that distant period in the history of South India, though it is clear from *Tolkāppiyam* that at the date of that ancient work the Cēra kingdom had been in existence for a long time. The exception is this.

1 *History of the Tamils*, p. 29.

There are references to the Mōriyar in *Aganānūru*² and in those poems, the passage of their war-chariots through a mountain-pass, which possibly had been thought to be impassable, receives prominent mention. It is also clear from *Agam* 281, that the objective of the Mōriyar army was South India; and that the Vaḍukar, (literally 'northerners') a ferocious people³ probably formed the van-guard. It has been suggested that the reference in these poems is to a Mauryan invasion.⁴ If so, the alleged Mauryan advance must have occurred before Aśoka; for Aśoka tells us that the Tamil kingdoms of the South were politically free; and there is no possibility of a Mauryan invasion after his time. Tārānāth, the Tibetan historian, speaks of Bindusāra's conquests in the Dekhan and South India; and perhaps, the *Aganānūru* lyrics refer to one of those invasions, as I suggested many years ago.⁵ Or possibly, *Mōriyar* is not the correct reading;⁶ and if so, the reference would be, as suggested by me elsewhere,⁷ to a southerly march into

2 *Agam*, 69; 251; 281.

3 *Agam*, 107 and 381.

4 The latest writer on the subject, Mr. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar takes this view in his book "*The Mauryan Polity*", pp. 58—61. My own view is that the alleged Mauryan invasion is a myth.

5 *Date of Śilappadhikāram* : *Madras Christian College Magazine*, 1917.

6 Cf. *Purāṇa*, 175.

7 *Kōlar and Vamba Mōriyar*. *Q.J.M.S.*, 1924.

India, through a north-eastern pass of the Himalyas, of a trans-Himalyan martial tribe at some remote period. However, to whatever occurrence the passages in *Aganānūra* may refer, they do not relate to the Cēra kingdom; and the account we have been able to gather from the Śāṅgam works about the Cēra kingdom, does not take us earlier than the first century of the Christian era.

Let us try to get a glimpse of the political, social and religious background of the Cēra history of this period as presented by Śāṅgam literature. It is clear that the rules of Hindu or Aryan polity mainly governed the administration. There is abundant evidence to show that the enunciation of the three-fold duties of the king given in the *Mānavadharmā Śāstra*⁸ was followed. The king was an indispensable institution; and his authority rested on *Dharma* of which he was the guardian.⁹ Emphasis is laid on his position as a father of his people.¹⁰ It is the duty of the king to know and remember that *he* is the source of the life of the world, and not cereals and water.¹¹

Hereditary monarchy seems to have been the prevailing form of government. We read

8 VII, 88.

9 *Puram*, 55. அற தெதிமுதறதேபரசின் கொற்றம்.

10 *Ibid.*, 5. காலம் குழவிகொள் பவரினெம்பு.

11 *Ibid.*, 186. செல்லு முபிரன்றே நீருமுயிரன்றே
மன்னனுயிர் த்தே மலர்நில புலகம்.

of no disputed succession or civil war in the Cēra kingdom during the period we have studied, though during this period there were instances in the Cōḷa kingdom. The King was essentially an absolute monarch, but he respected and followed the wise counsel of Ministers and other learned men. He extended equal protection and justice to all his subjects.¹² The minister was a responsible officer; and the unsympathetic and tyrannical minister who misleads the kings to oppress the people is denounced even by the royal poet Pālaipāḍiya-Perum-Kaḍuṅkō. Thus, in *Pālai-kali*,¹³ he likens the scorching sun of the sandy deserts to 'a king, who by a minister bad, unsympathetic and unjust, is led'; and in *Pālai* 9, he writes that the desolate region of the desert is

Like a land where the ministers fleece without
scruple
 And grind without mercy the people who groan
 Under crushing misrule.

The minister's position was obviously delicate, and he could not be always certain of the king's favour. Thus in *Pālai* 7, we read—

The minister who in the sunshine basks
 Of royal favour, working still with zeal
 But for his master's good, without regard
 For his own benefit, doth sudden fall
 Under displeasure and he loses all!

¹² *Puram*, 17 and 55.

¹³ See *Pālai*, 7.

S. 2.

The effective protection of his people is stressed in Śāngam literature as the essential function of the king. Whether for the satisfactory discharge of that essential function or from motives of personal ambition, or from sheer irresistible blood-lust, kings often indulged in war, and not infrequently in such excess that learned men seeking their bounty felt compelled to remind them that peace had its victories no less renowned than war.¹⁵ Almost every great king of the Śāngam period appears to have been a great warrior, and the Cūma monarchs were no exception. Necessarily, they maintained armies of well-equipped soldiers, who wore defensive armours (*Piraiñcām*) and were armed with bows and arrows, spears and swords, and used shields made of tough bull-hide.¹⁶ Before starting for war, elaborate sacrifice to *Korṟavai*,¹⁷ the Dravidian *Durgā*, and the presiding deity of the war-drum was made.¹⁸ The kings themselves often led their armies in person in the field of battle; and the first act of provocation by an invading army seems to have been the felling of the *Kāval-maram* or totem tree of the enemy from the encircling woods.¹⁹ The lifting of the enemy's

15 Cf. *Puram*, 5.

16 *Patirrup-pattu*, 45.

17 Literally 'The Goddess of Victory'.

18 *Patirrup-pattu*, 30; *Patigam* III.

19 *Puram*, 36.

cattle was also a prelude to war.²⁰ The forts were well guarded and the gates secured with bolts of tough wood;²¹ and the fortifications were surrounded by moats filled with water.²² On the field, the kings used war-chariots; and besides foot-soldiers, they employed horses and elephants in war.²³ Appalling slaughter, and utter devastation and destruction by fire followed in the wake of war,²⁴ and frequently personal humiliation, often brutally vindictive, were inflicted on the vanquished foe and even on his women-folk.²⁵ Indeed, showing clemency to a vanquished enemy evoked surprise and wonder.²⁶ The souls of heroes slain in battle were believed to attain *Vira svarga*, which corresponds to the Valhalla of Gothic mythology; and so firmly was this notion rooted that among the warrior clan, a still-born child was cleft in twain at birth that it might attain 'the heroes' heaven'.²⁷ The hero could not bear to receive a wound on the back in the field of battle; and he atoned for the disgrace by self-immolation by starvation on the scene.²⁸

20 *Agam*, 372.

21 *Puram*, 20.

22 *Ibid.*, 14 and 37.

23 *Ibid.*, 14.

24 *Patirrup-pattu*, 25, 26, 43 and 43.

25 *Ibid.*, V *Patigam*.

26 *Patirrup-pattu*, 32.

27 *Puram*, 74.

28 *Ibid.*, 65.

It is interesting to note that in those days, the martial spirit animated not only the men, but also the women of the land. At a time of war, the women-folk urged their male relations to march to battle, resolved to win or die like heroes. The wife rejoiced to see her husband display his valour, and the mother was proud of her son who showed his bravery; and neither was troubled by the thought of any possible danger to the life of her hero. They regarded a dastard in war with contempt. *Puram* 278, given below, depicts vividly this significant trait in the character of the ancient Tamil dame.

The dame of ancient age, with shrunken veins,
And loosely-hanging tissues, heard her son
Had from the battle turned in fear and fled.
In towering rage she vowed, if that he so,
She would for very shame cut off her breasts
That gave the despicable coward suck.
She snatched a sword, swept with impetuous speed
Into the gory battle-field, and searched
The heaps of warriors slain, when lo! she found
Stretched on the field of glory, cut in twain,
Her valiant son. Then swelled, indeed, with pride
The mother's heart, which was with gladness filled,
Intenser far than when she gave him birth!^{28a}

Purap-poruḷ-Veṇḇā-Mālai, the author of which is a *Cēra*, gives the grammar of warfare as understood in ancient Tamil India; and we see from it that the approved rule was that the invading army should not molest the enemy's cattle, which before the battle began, should be

^{28a} Cf. *Puram*, 277; 279; 295; 86.

removed to a place of safety. The rules also enjoined that the invading army should—

Spare the temples where sacrifices are offered;
Spare the consecrated dwellings of the ascetics;
Spare the residence of the holy Vēdic Brahmanas.

It is seen that the vanquished king was sometimes kept in confinement as a prisoner by the victor, possibly in expectation of suitable ransom.²⁹

S. 3.

Watered by perennial streams, the Cēra country was very fertile, and its prosperity was maintained by the Cēra kings. A large proportion of the population pursued agriculture; but other occupations, such as fishing and hunting were also followed. Arts, trade and commerce were also pursued. The Cēra Kings, as Kuṟumkōliyūr-Kiḷār, writes in *Puṟam* 17—

Their royal sceptre even held
O'er all their subjects, where-so-e'er they lived,
In hill or mountain, forest or in town;
Protecting them with equal justice, they
Chastised all wrong, and as their due, received
The share of yield from land by law allowed.

This share is explained by the commentator to be one-sixth, the *Ṣaḍbhāga* of the Dharmaśāstra and the Arthaśāstra. Among the industries pursued in the country, were spinning

²⁹ *Puṟam*, 74 and 17.

and weaving. Spinning cotton was an occupation of women,³⁰ who also prepared beaten rice(*Awasu*) with wooden pestles (*உலக்கை*),³¹ Besides cotton cloth, also silk was woven,³² and they were of superior quality. Files, axes and other iron implements and metal-lamps supported by metal-stand were produced,³³ and jewellery in gold, silver and precious stones were made.³⁴ Carpentry and work in hides also flourished. We have definite mention that hides were fashioned into shields for the use of soldiers in battles,³⁵ cut into thongs and circlets for use in Yāgas³⁶ and into straps which were 'stitched with ease and dexterity for cots' by cobblers.³⁷ Salt was manufactured in salt-pans and carried in carts for sale.³⁸ There was also extensive trade in fish³⁹ in which fish-women took an active part. The land grew spices, especially pepper, which was much sought after in the western world,⁴⁰ and it abounded in

30 *Puram*, 125.

31 *Patirrup-pattu*, 29.

32 *Ibid.*, 12.

33 *Puram* 36; and *Patirrup-pattu*, 47 and 52.

34 *Puram* 66; *Patirrup-pattu*, 16.

35 *Patirrup-pattu*, 45.

36 *Ibid.*, 74.

37 *Puram*, 82.

38 *Neytal*, 21; *Naz.* 4; *Agam*, 119; 310; and *Kurun.*, 165.

39 *Puram*, 343.

40 *Agam.*, 149.

cocconut palms,⁴¹ sandal-wood, *Agil* and sugarcane.⁴² Its elephants gave ivory; its mines yielded precious stones and its seas yielded pearls.⁴³ The country was beyond doubt very flourishing and wealthy.

S. 4.

Ship-building industry does not appear to be mentioned in *Sangam* works; but the people of the Cēra country were familiar with navigation of the high seas⁴⁴ and from early times they had trade relations with foreign nations. We have evidence that in the very dim past, the rare products of Malabar found their way to Babylon and Egypt, and later the Phoenicians controlled the spice trade of Malabar. Chinese junks were also attracted to the ports of the Cēra country, with which it seems obvious the trade relations of the Chinese, which probably began long before the ships of Greece and Rome called at the Cēra ports, must have continued for a long time; and from the architecture of the buildings on the Malabar coast, which reproduces the distinctive features of the architecture of Mongolian countries, particularly in its temples, one may conclude that a Chinese colony had been established, where, as generally happened with people living

41 *Puram*, 17.

42 *Patirrup-pattu*, 87.

43 *Ibid.*, 67.

44 *Pālai*, 4; *Maṇi*, IV, ll. 29—34.

in an alien land, the Chinese settlers lived in houses built in the style of their native country. To my mind the Mongolian curves and the up-turned eaves and gables that we see in Travancore houses and temples supply strong evidence of Chinese influence which must have sprung from Chinese trade relationship with the Cēra country.

With the discovery of Hippalus about the beginning of the first century of the Christian era, that, by taking advantage of the monsoon winds, ships could sail straight from the Red Sea and reach India in 40 days, a new era in the commercial activity of the Cēra kingdom was inaugurated. The direction of the wind led the ships straight to Musiri which Pliny described as the nearest mart in India. The *Patirrup-pattu* and *Puramāṇṇu* poems bear eloquent testimony to the commercial activity of Musiri and other ports of the Cēra kingdom; and we are told that in exchange for gold that foreign vessels brought, they took home pepper and other valuable products from those ports. To what extent trade in pepper and other products was carried on with Rome will appear from the words of Pliny who says: 'In no year does India drain us of less than 550,000,000 sesterces, giving back her own wares which are sold among us at fully 100 times their first cost.' Large quantities of Roman gold and silver came into the Cēra kingdom, as the result of export of pepper to Rome, and thousands of Roman

coins, mostly of the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius and Claudius, have been discovered on the Malabar coast, and in the districts of Madura and Coimbatore.⁴⁵ The trade at the Cēra ports was so extensive, that warehouses had to be erected.⁴⁶ We notice from Pliny that in his days (c. 50 A.C.) a safer and more convenient port than Musiri was Barake, to which pepper was brought down the river in dugouts or boats scooped out of a single tree from Kottanāra (Kuṭṭa-nādu). Barake has now been rightly identified with Porakad, south of Alleppey.⁴⁷ By the time of the *Periplus*, however, Musiri, modern Cranganore, had become the gate of India, and the foremost port for foreign trade.

Indeed, in the days of the *Periplus*, it was a very busy port. The author of the *Periplus* says that from this port were purchased pepper, pearls, ivory, silk, spikenard, malabathram (Skt. Tamālapatra), transparent stones like beryl, diamonds and rubies, and tortise shell; and according to Mr. Schoff, the latest translator of the *Periplus*, pepper supplied, perhaps, three-fourth of the total bulk

45 See Warmington "*Commerce between Rome and India*", Chap. 7.

46 *Patirrup-pattu*, 55.

47 The credit of this identification belongs to Mr. I. C. Chakko, a former Director of Industries, Travancore. Is Nilaynda the present Nindakara, just north of Quilon?

of the average west-bound cargo. Pliny's language is almost furious when he writes of the import of pepper into Rome. He says: "It is quite surprising that the use of pepper has come so much into fashion, seeing that it is sometimes by their substance and sometimes by their appearance that articles attract our notice; whereas pepper has nothing in it that can plead as a recommendation to either fruit or berry, its only desirable quality being a certain pungency; and yet it is for this that we import it all the way from India! Who was the first to make a trial of it as an article of food? And who, I wonder, was the man that was not content to prepare himself by hunger only for the satisfying of a greedy appetite?" In spite of such strictures, the Roman import trade in pepper grew; and we are told that when Alaric the Visigoth laid siege to Rome, among the terms he offered for raising the siege was the immediate payment of 3,000 lbs. of pepper. It is clear from the accounts that there was flourishing foreign trade on an international scale at the port of Musiri. Besides pepper, pearl was another important export from South India; and about the craze for pearls in Rome, Pliny writes: "Our ladies glory in having pearls suspended from their fingers, two or three of them dangling from their ears, delighted even with the rattling of the pearls as they knock against each other; and now, at the present time, the poor classes are

even affecting them. They put them on their feet, and that, not only on the laces of their sandals, but all over the shoes." He mentions Lollia Paulina, the wife of the Emperor Caius, who was seen on an ordinary betrothal wearing pearls to the value of 40,000,000 sesterces or roughly £333,000!

There is thus remarkable concurrence of testimony, as already stated, between the Śāngam works and the *Periplus* on the commercial activity of the ports of the Cēra country; and at these sea-ports there were warehouses maintained for storing foreign merchandise.⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that the valuable products of the country were sold to foreign merchants for gold;⁴⁹ while apparently paddy was adopted as the usual measure of value for internal trade. Thus in *Puram* 343, we learn that fish was bartered for paddy. There were recognized measures for measuring paddy (தெள்ளின் அம்பண அளவை⁵⁰) and tribute paid in paddy, we read, was measured into the state granaries.⁵¹ Apparently, metallic currency alone was employed in foreign trade.

S. 5.

The Tamils appear to have been a brave, warm-hearted and warm-blooded people who

48 *Patirrup-pattu*, 55; 67 and 74.

49 *Agam*, 149 and *Puram*, 343.

50 *Patirrup-pattu*, 66 and 71.

51 *Ibid.*, 66.

cared much for the mere joys of living. They cultivated poetry, music and dancing. Their staple food was rice; but fish and meat were also used. They had almost a partiality for palm-wine. One might say that, perhaps, wine and women, war and song, largely claimed the attention of at least the leisured classes in those early days. The Cēra kings liberally patronized poetry and song, and were easily accessible to poets and singers. These came from both sexes and from all castes and classes; and they were all very munificently rewarded without distinction of caste, creed or sex. The author of the *History of the Tamils* cynically observes:—"Besides protecting his subjects, the only other function of Rajas was to be surrounded by beggar bards, who eulogized them in their poems and were plied with food and drink as reward."⁵² There seems to be some warrant for the last statement, afforded by *Patirrup-pattu*, 43, lines 34 and 35, which run as follows:—

சேறந்நு னெடிதிரைத்த நம்பின் ஸயிரியர்
உண்டெனத் தவா அந் நள்ளு ;

but there is ample evidence that the bards were also more substantially rewarded. The variety of *Vāḷḷe* mentioned in Śangam literature, and the institution of *pōṇar* indisputably show that the times and conditions were specially favourable for the art of music to flourish.

Minstrelsy was much patronized not only in courts but also in urban life; and we read of special adaptations of musical instruments for entertainment in rural areas. Śāṅgam poetry is full of life and colour, and affords a faithful mirror of ancient Tamil Society. It may be noted that several Cēra kings and other members of the Cēra royal family occupy an honoured place among the Śāṅgam poets.

Adult marriage was the normal rule among the ancient Tamils. From *Tolkāppiyam* it is seen that the approved form of marital union was of the nature of what is known amongst Sanskrit law-givers as the *gāndhārva* form of marriage. It consisted in voluntary union in secrecy from reciprocal desire; and Tamil usage required no religious rite to give it validity. *Tolkāppiyam* explains that in course of time the sanctity of *Kalava* or secret union was violated by deceitfulness and treachery; and so Aryans or learned men—*Aiyar* is the term employed and it is either a corruption of *Āryar* or is a derivative from *gā*, meaning *admiration* (*Tolkāppiyam*) and denotes 'men who evoke admiration'—enjoined the rule of *Karpu* or open marriage, following the usage of the higher classes (*Mēn-makkaḷ*),⁵³ and thus publicity, which distinguishes a recognized marriage from an illicit connection or concubinage, was secured to the union. *Karpu*

53 *Tol: karpuyal*, 3 and 4.

consisted in the bride being given away in marriage by her parents or other relations; and it was usually a convention that concluded the relation that had begun and had continued for some time in the Kalavu form. It is interesting to note that the approved forms of marriage according to the Sanskrit Smṛtis were regarded by the Tamils as inappropriate or unapproved marital unions—*Poruntā-k-kāman*. Sometimes the bride-groom was chosen by a trial of strength in bull fight (*mullai* 9) and occasionally bride-price was paid.⁵⁴ When the choice of a husband by the parents happened to be different from a woman's own choice, she over-reached them by eloping with her lover,⁵⁵ a procedure which custom recognized. An unsuccessful wooer often succeeded in getting his sweet-heart to marry him, by having recourse to *maḍal-ērai*, which consisted in his wearing a wreath of *sema* (*avirai*) and *maḍar* flowers and going about in a vehicle of palmyra fronds, beseeching public sympathy and help.⁵⁶

There was no rule against polygamy; and concubinage seems to have been prevalent,

54 *Nar.*, 300.

55 *Pālai*, 8 and *Agam*, 153.

56 *Neytal*, 21, 22, 24 and *Kural*, 1,133; 1,135. Vide my 'Glimpses into the Married Life of the Ancient Tamil People', XXII, *Q.J.M.S.*, For a description of *Maḍal-ērai* see Dikshitar's *Studies in Tamil Literature and History*, pp. 275-6 and my translation of *Neytal* 22 in the article cited (XXII, *Q.J.M.S.*).

especially in urban areas, *Maruta-nilam*, where a life of ease and luxury, wealth and pleasure was possible. The frequent mention in *Agam* literature of *hetacrae* and their influence shows that they formed a recognized institution, in early Tamil society; and we read that they used also to throng at festivals, where acting and dancing prevailed.⁵⁷ The danseuse not infrequently acted as a procuress.⁵⁸ The following extract from *Marutak-kali* voices the piteous complaint of a faithful wife addressed to her husband guilty of marital disloyalty.

Hard-hearted, long hast thou forsaken me!
 My beauty's wasted; and my eyes have known
 No sleep! And if unable to sit up,
 I seek my couch at times to close my eyes,
 The sounding drums that do announce each day
 Thy visit to thy artful courtezans,
 Who fragrant garlands wear, prevent my rest!
 Thou hast neglected me! my weeping eyes,
 Deprived of sleep so long, seek transient rest,
 Comforted by my darling's son's caress;
 The merry song thy youthful mistresses
 Sing as they dance in jollity in homes
 Thou hast provided, drives such rest away!

—*Marutam*, 5.

Though there is overwhelming evidence in *Sangam* literature of the husband's infidelity to his wife, the ancient Tamil wife apparently never swerved from loyalty to her husband even in very trying circumstances. The following

57 *Agam*, 326 and 222.

58 *Nar.*, 310.

poem from *Pālaikkalī* is illustrative of the typical Tamil wife of those days.

Thou tellest me the desert is so parched
 For utter want of rain that the wild deer
 On prickly cactus plant is forced to feed;
 And, by the shafts of heartless robbers pierced,
 Wayfarers in that arid region lie
 Writhing with thirst which they attempt to slake
 With tears that trickle to their dried-up tongues!
 My lord and husband! Thou dost not, perhaps,
 My nature comprehend. It is not meet
 Thou shouldst our bond thus disregard and go!
 To go with thee and in thy journey share
 With thee the perils of the desert track,
 Know that alone can give me happiness!

—*Pālaī*, 5.

When the husband left on a long journey, the wife kept count of the number of days he was away by making marks on a wall,⁵⁹ a method of keeping count of days then common⁶⁰ as it is even now in some villages.

Women were very fond of jewels, and this trait was so pronounced in their nature, that even in Sangam literature they came to be referred to, by metonymy as *Geḷḷam*⁶¹ and *Geḷḷam*⁶². Besides ordinary jewels like bangles, anklets, belts, rings, etc., there was in use a jewel fashioned like or made of tiger's teeth which

59 *Agam*, 351.

60 *Agam*, 61 and 289.

61 *Puram*, 3 and *Patirrupu-pattu*, 65 and 88.

62 *Neytal*, 22.

ladies wore along with the *tāli*.⁶³ Music and dance were cultivated; and there were professional minstrels called *pāṇar* and *virali* and dancers. In *Marutam* 14, we read of 'the circlet which accomplished dancers wear on their fair forehead, when they appear upon the stage'. Among musical instruments frequent mention is made of the shepherd's reed⁶⁴ and the seven stringed *Yāl*,⁶⁵ which from its synonym கலப்பை⁶⁶ may, perhaps, be thought to have been shaped like a plough. Collyrium was used by women; and men smeared themselves with sandal-paste and wore garlands of flowers and strings of pearls.

S. 6.

Fasts and ceremonial baths were common.⁶⁷ It is clear that belief in omens and astrology was general. For example, Kākkai-pāṇiniyār Naccellaiyār writes in *Kuruntokai* 210 that the cawing of the crow presages the arrival of a guest,⁶⁸ a belief that exists even now in Tamil villages. It is due to this circumstance that the term Kākkai-pāṇiniyār is prefixed to her name.

63 புலிப்பைத் தோத்த புலம்பு மணித்தாவி *Agam*, 7. Even now tiger-claws cased in gold are used as jewel for children.

64 Cf. *Neytal*, 13 and 14.

65 Cf. *Pālai*, 8.

66 Cf. *Puram*, 206. (Commentator's note).

67 *Paṭiṇṇup-pattu*, 31, 1, 6.

68 கிருந்து வரக் கரைத்த காக்கை.

The throbbing of a woman's left eye-lid or her left shoulder or arm, was believed to betoken the happening of something good to her; while in the case of a man that significance was conveyed by the throbbing of his right eye-lid, arm or shoulder,⁶⁹ a belief that persists to this day. The 'click-click' of the wall-lizard prognosticated good or evil according to the direction from which it proceeded,⁷⁰ and even today that belief persists among country folk. We see from *Aganūnāru*, that omens used to be consulted before going to battle. Knowledge of planetary astronomy and astrology existed among the Tamils in those early days;⁷¹ and lunar asterisms and months of the year were also known.⁷² The appearance of a comet or the falling of a meteor, it was believed, indicated the approaching death of a king.⁷³

Among the mythological stories then current, we may mention Tripura-Sambhāra by Śiva,⁷⁴ Śūrpadma-Sambhāra by Subrahmanya⁷⁵ and the Kṛṣṇa legends.⁷⁶ Kṛttikā-dīpam or

69 *Pālai*, 10.

70 *Pālai*, 10; *Agam*, 9; 151, 289, 351 and *Nar.*, 246 and 333.

71 *Paripāṭal*, XI; *Śilap.*, and *Patirrup-pattu*, 24.

72 *Puram*, 229; *Agam*, 137 and 141.

73 *Puram*, 229.

74 *Pālaik-kālī*, V and *Puram*, 55.

75 *Patirrup-pattu*, 12.

76 *Śilappadhikāram* refers to boyish sports and dances of Kṛṣṇa.

illumination on Tiru-Kārttigai day was common even in those early days;⁷⁷ and we read of a *Panguni* festival (Agam 137).⁷⁸

With much that belonged to non-Aryan practices and primitive culture, Aryan rites and culture had also widely spread over the land. Worship of departed heroes was common. *Puranānūru* and *Aṅanānūru* contain several poems, from which we see that dolmens or rather stones were set up for the departed, whose weapons were placed leaning on the stones. These stones were decorated with red flowers and peacock feathers, and the name of the deceased hero was inscribed on them; and intoxicating liquor and worship were offered to them.⁷⁹ Malignant demons were propitiated with sacrifice.⁸⁰ *Koṇṇarai*, was worshipped with elaborate sacrifices, especially before going to war. The dead were cremated,⁸¹ though burial also seems to have been practised.⁸² There is abundant proof that Vēdic religion had spread over the land, and Vēdic rites and rituals prevailed.⁸³ Among

77 *Nay.*, 202.

78 *Pangunni-Uttavam*, which falls in March-April, is the most important festival in Śrī Padmanabha Śrāmi temple at Trivandrum as also in temples of Tamil districts.

79 *Puram*, 232, 263, 264 and 329.

80 *Potiṇṇup-pattu*, 71.

81 *Puram*, 245 and 246.

82 *Potiṇṇup-pattu*, 44.

83 *Ibid.*, III, and VII.

the deities that were worshipped were Śiva, Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Muruga or Skanda. Brahmanas performed their Vēdic rites⁸⁴ and pursued their six-fold duties. They discharged the onerous duty of expounding *Dharma* to the kings, and they were chosen as king's ministers. In speaking of Palyānai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvan, Pālai Kaudamanār writes in *Patirrup-pattu*, III:

ஒதல் வேட்டலைய பிதர் செய்த
 வீதல் ஏத்தல் கண்ணுறு புரிந்தொழுகும்
 அநம் புரி ஆத்தணர் வழி மொழிந்தொழுகி
 ஞானம் சின் வழி மொழுகப் பாடல் சான்று
 நாமுடன் வினக்கு நாடா.

Patirrup-pattu, 24.

As preceptors of *Dharma*, they were held in respect by kings. In *Patirrup-pattu*, VII, Kapilar in his praise of Śelvak-kaḍumkō Vāli Ātan writes: பார்ப்பார்க் கல்லது பணிபதி வலியெய். From the testimony of Śāngam literature, it is clear that Vēdic rites were not infrequently performed even by kings, and Brahmanas were liberally helped to perform *Yāgas*. Gifts of cows and land were freely bestowed on them. We also read of Brahmana ascetics⁸⁵ and one Cēra king, as we saw, became, after a life of military glory, an ascetic like his Brahmana preceptor. Though Brahmanism was predominant in the land, Buddhism and Jainism also prevailed among the people, and the adherents

⁸⁴ *Neytal*, 2 and 13.

⁸⁵ *Pālai*, 8.

of all the three religions lived in the country in perfect friendliness.⁸⁶

Such is the political, social and religious background that Śāṅgam literature presents in regard to the Cēra kingdom, which, richly endowed as it was by nature, was ruled over by sympathetic monarchs, who besides being great warriors, were also liberal patrons of learning and art, and made the welfare of the people their dominant concern. The Cēra Kingdom still flourishes like the bay tree; for it is gratifying to note that, though of the three Tamil kingdoms celebrated in Śāṅgam literature, the Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa kingdoms have long ago ceased to exist, there still thrives under the rule of its own kings the Cēra kingdom,—

“Bright breadth of plain, blue-veined by many a
stream,
Umbrageous hills, sweet glades, and forest fair.”

⁸⁶ This is evident from a study of *Śilappadhikāvam*.

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